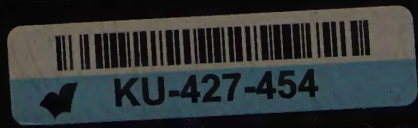
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# GALLIPOLI MEMORIES

THE AREA OF THE GALLIPOLI OPERATIONS

# GALLIPOLI MEMORIES

By

COMPTON MACKENZIE

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TO

ORLO WILLIAMS

WHO IN MARCH, 1915, BEGAN THIS BOOK

# CONTENTS


| CHAPTER | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| I | THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR | 1 |
| II | OFF TO ALEXANDRIA | 7 |
| III | GETTING A UNIFORM | 19 |
| IV | LOOKING FOR G.H.Q. | 30 |
| V | THE *ARCADIAN* | 46 |
| VI | HELLES | 65 |
| VII | LIFE AT G.H.Q. | 84 |
| VIII | THE BATTLE OF THE FOURTH OF JUNE | 110 |
| IX | MORE LIFE AT G.H.Q. | 126 |
| X | ARMY CORPS HEADQUARTERS | 149 |
| XI | TENEDOS FOR THE SECOND TIME | 176 |
| XII | SHELLS | 197 |
| XIII | TENEDOS FOR THE THIRD TIME | 212 |
| XIV | OFF TO MYTILENE | 239 |
| XV | DAYS AND NIGHTS IN LESBOS | 260 |
| XVI | THE VASSILAKI FAMILY | 298 |
| XVII | THE NEW ARMY | 328 |
| XVIII | BACK AT G.H.Q. | 349 |
| XIX | THE DARK NIGHT OF THE SUVLA LANDING | 366 |
| XX | AFTER SUVLA | 376 |
| XXI | HELLAS | 391 |
| | INDEX | 403 |

# *PREFACE*

*THE title of this book strictly expresses what it is. I kept no journal, and the few letters I wrote while I was at Gallipoli, though useful for fixing dates, were too much taken up with the domestic problems at home of money, clothes, books, gardens and domicile, together with requests for what were called comforts for the troops to spend much time over life on the Peninsula. On the whole I do not regret my failure to keep a journal, for by not doing so I have been compelled to retain impressions, conversations, voyages, and actions in my head, which means that they are as fresh now as fourteen years ago. Moreover, continuous pondering over them during that period has enabled me, I hope, to achieve a measure of selection. At the same time, this is so entirely a personal record that it inevitably possesses many of the faults of a diary, and I fear that nowhere does my narrative succeed in transcending the particular or escaping from egoism. It remains a peculiar, not a general experience, and as such I beg that it may be read.*

*This first volume adds nothing of the least historical value to the literature of the war, though in succeeding volumes I hope to shed some light on the situation in Greece during* 1916 *and* 1917, *which, obscure enough in any case, has been still further obscured by a mass of partisan writing on both sides.*

*I should have liked to squeeze my memories of Athens into one volume, but I fear that will be impossible if I preserve, as I am anxious to preserve, the human aspect of an extraordinary state of politics. So* Gallipoli Memories *will be followed by* Earlier Athenian Memories, *covering the period from*

*the end of August, 1915, to the resignation of the Skouloudis Cabinet at the end of June, 1916. The third volume,* Later Athenian Memories, *will close with the tragic farce of December, 1916. The final volume,* Ægean Memories, *will be chiefly concerned with life and adventure in the Greek Islands during 1917, but it will also include a certain amount of political history.*

*Ever since the war I have been meditating over a war novel. Indeed I have long had an immense affair in seven volumes mapped out; but I have finally come to the conclusion that my experiences in Athens and the Cyclades will make a better novel if related as fact. I cannot invent a better story than what actually happened. I cannot imagine more richly tragical, comical, and farcical characters than I actually met. Even the time I spent at Gallipoli seems to compose itself into a tale. The conversations I record may not achieve the accuracy of the dictaphone; but that is only because I have selected what was necessary to convey the spirit of them. Were I to have printed in italics the actual words used, most of them would have appeared in that type. Here and there I have used invented names instead of real ones, for reasons which will be obvious; but such discretion is rare. I may add that I have resisted the temptation to refresh my own memory by drawing upon that of others. For any minor inaccuracies which might have been avoided by less independence, I apologize; but personal responsibility was essential to the form of narrative I have chosen, and I wish to make it clear that I fully accept that responsibility.*

*My object has been to recapture the spirit in which I passed through a memorable experience. This must be my excuse for not displaying as much moral indignation as the mood of the moment expects from a writer about the War.*

*Isle of Jethou,*
*August 31st, 1929.*

# GALLIPOLI MEMORIES

## CHAPTER I

### THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR

TOWARD the end of July, 1914 my wife and I were hurrying back from Capri, partly because the European situation looked unpropitious for the task of finishing the second part of *Sinister Street*, which Martin Secker wanted to bring out in the Autumn, but chiefly because I hoped that the Serbian crisis would be solved and that as soon as my book was written I should be able to volunteer for service against Ulster.

Secker had asked us to stay with him at Iver, and we were there when the midnight ultimatum expired amid the silence of that August countryside through which the dusty road wound glimmering. Secker's sedate house built in the reign of Queen Anne wore an air of having lived through too many famous events to be any longer capable of responding to the excitement of its inmates. I leaned out of a bedroom window, my thoughts losing themselves like moths in the darkness when I tried to catch them and pin them down to the problem of the part I should play in this convulsion. And then abruptly the hush of that warm leafy night was disturbed by the remote rumbling of trains, one after another of them rolling and rumbling southward; guns themselves would not have muttered a heavier menace of change. I fell asleep to that endless sound of trains, and in the morning I went up to London to see what could be done about getting myself into the thick of events. I inter-

viewed a soldier friend at the War Office who was frankly contemptuous of my plan to join a territorial battalion of the Seaforth Highlanders.

"You'd be no earthly good to us," he assured me.

"I was an officer in the First Hertfords when I was seventeen. It's not as if I had never had any military experience."

"Go back to your work. You'll be doing more good by keeping us cheerful with your novels. We really do not want married subalterns of thirty-one."

So back I went to Iver, crestfallen; and there I sat up all night and every night for two months, writing the last three hundred pages of *Sinister Street*. I used to have my breakfast when the rest of the household was having tea, and about six o'clock Secker used to get home from John Street with the evening papers and all the garnered rumours of the day. No wonder the left-hand pages of the manuscript are scrabbled over with names like Louvain and Ypres and Valenciennes. They must have been written down almost automatically while my conscious mind on the right-hand page struggled with those reputedly mellifluous sentences, which were at any rate as sticky as honey to clarify. The book was being printed as I wrote it, so that it might be ready for publication within a month of penning the last word.

In October I decided to try again for a commission; but this time doctors were the discouragement. I should never pass a medical examination I was assured, and the only climate where I was likely to be of any use would be somewhere like Egypt. An admiring and hopeful friend told me that Sir John Maxwell would welcome my services on his Staff, and one afternoon at the Savile another friend offered to introduce me to Mr. H. J. Tennant, who was having tea in the club. A personal interview with the Under-Secretary of State for War seemed in my mood at

this date the kind of magical good fortune that happened to poor fishermen in *The Arabian Nights*. Alas, the Under-Secretary was not so powerful as I had supposed he must be. All he could do for me was to tell me that the 42nd Division consisting of Lancashire Territorial battalions was in Egypt, and that if I wanted to reach Egypt the only way it could be managed was by applying for a commission in one of those battalions through the Lord Lieutenant or some such Lancastrian dignitary. As a child I had supported the Red Rose against the White; but my personal interest in Lancashire did not extend beyond that. Besides, what doctor in England was going to pass me fit for general service abroad? The interview with the Under-Secretary of State for War came to an end. I see him now in our faded old smoking-room at 107 Piccadilly. We were not as a club famous for dandyism, and whether it was the comfortable shabbiness of the room or the equally comfortable bagginess of the members' trousers I do not know, but certainly as I try to recapture the details of that interview I seem to fancy the impression of a slightly excessive elegance in Mr. H. J. Tennant, a certain statesmanlike unreality about his high glossy collar. Perhaps I thought that an Under-Secretary of State for War had no business to resemble so closely a *Vanity Fair* cartoon of the 'nineties unless he could do something more useful and *affairé* than tell me what I knew already, unless he could in fact obtain for me a job on the Staff of Sir John Maxwell. We were most of us in a condition of elated credulity at that early stage of the war, and this was my first disillusionment. When I was a small boy I was once bidden to observe the Empress of Austria walking up from the beach at Cromer. The usual exhortation of my nurse was not to stare at people, so I naturally expected a vision of the utmost magnificence. I saw instead a woman in a grey alpaca dust-cloak who was carrying a straw-coloured parasol to shield herself from curious eyes.

The Empress of Austria! In that wan withering moment empresses whether of Austria or Byzantium or Rome went the way of fauns and fairies. Now twenty-five years later an Under-Secretary of State for War took the same prosaic road.

I have often thought how lucky it was that no influential star did draw me toward Sir John Maxwell, for a job on his Staff in Egypt might have led to a job on his Staff in Ireland, which would probably have ended in my getting shot myself. I do not know how far Maxwell himself was responsible for the shooting of those young Irish patriots; but I thank God I was never on his Staff, for I should either have deserted or lost my reason.

I waited in London for a while, trying to find some way of getting to the war without a medical examination. None presented itself, and at the end of October while the desperate battle of Ypres was at its height my wife and I went back to Italy. If I was meant to take any active part in the war fate would arrange matters. It did not seem profitable to postpone any longer the writing of my next book. On the boat crossing the Channel I saw my friend of the War Office in khaki and told him I was going back to Capri to write.

"The best thing you could do. We don't want all these amateurs."

"Still, I thought that as I had already held a commission in the old Volunteers I might have got some kind of obscure Staff job in Egypt."

"Staff job? Ha-ha! How very comic! My dear man, the last people we want on the Staff are charming amateurs like yourself. And anyway this business of diverting to Egypt troops we require in France will have to stop. The only place where anybody is any use at all just now is over there." He pointed to the misty outline of the French coast beyond that ashen autumnal sea.

A few minutes after this I heard myself accosted by my Christian name, and looking up from the deck-chair in which I was concentrating upon not being sea-sick I recognized in an Army Service Corps Major a friend of boyhood. The turbid waters of the Channel vanished. I was in Hampshire again, playing hide-and-seek in a house whose dry aroma of age came stealing back through memory, more potent than the salty damp of our actual surroundings. I was once more in that high-walled garden full of gnarled apple-trees and the flutter of blackbirds' wings. I was once more beating the hazel-hedges for nuts along that dusky, dewy Hampshire lane, honeysuckle-scented. A lanky youth my friend had been, as lanky as one of the hollyhocks in that old garden and with cheeks as red and round. Now he was a tall Major in the Army Service Corps, and the steamer was entering the harbour of Boulogne. I felt wretchedly superfluous among that crowd of mixed uniforms on the quay. Even the funny little fellow with a face like a provincial comedian in a uniform between the Salvation Army and the Church Lads' Brigade who was going to hand out tracts and toffee somewhere or other behind the Lines was living life as it ought to be lived, not as I proposed to live it presently in Southern Italy, writing one more unnecessary novel. I waved my War Office friend good-bye in the blusterous chill of late October and enviously watched him like a senior schoolboy greeting other important seniors at the beginning of a new term. No, he was not killed a few weeks later. On the contrary he passed through half the letters of the alphabet to become a K.B.E. and a General.

It seemed wrong to be enjoying the wonderful November weather we found in Capri, when things were so desperate in France and Flanders; and I was thankful when I was asked to write an article on behalf of the Commission for Relief in Belgium. I have no copy of what I wrote; but I remember that at least it managed to avoid any self-

righteousness over the responsibility for the War. One is so apt nowadays to regard even one's own motives and actions during the War with a contemptuous cynicism that it is as well to remind oneself of emotions which were profoundly and sincerely felt. I only print the two letters below to illustrate the generosity of men who, engaged upon as noble a task as men ever undertook, found time to make an author feel that he had been of some use.

3, London Wall Buildings,
London.
*January 7th*, 1915

*Dear Sir:*

*I have had the great pleasure to-day of reading the article which you have prepared for us on the subject of Belgium.*

*The ordinary commercial person may feel all that you have set forth, but the gift of expressing it comes to but few. You have described the work of this Commission in a manner which reaches our absolute ideal and I wish to convey to you our individual thanks for your interest and work. I am certain it will be the most fruitful of the statements which we have yet been able to put before the American people.*

*Yours faithfully,*
*H. C. Hoover.**

3, London Wall Buildings,
London.
*January 5th*, 1915.

*Dear Sir:*

*On behalf of the Belgian Minister and the Commission please allow me to express our sincere gratitude for the* magnificent *article which you were kind enough to write. It could not have been better.*

*Yours gratefully,*
*W. A. M. Goode.*†

*Now the President of the United States.
†Sir William Goode, K.B.E.

## CHAPTER II

### OFF TO ALEXANDRIA

ON the fourth of April, when I was within sight of the end of *Guy and Pauline*, a letter from my old friend Orlo Williams reached me at Capri :

On board the
Cunard
R.M.S. Franconia.
*March 23rd*, 1915.

*I don't know when this will get to you, but I am writing to you by order of Sir Ian Hamilton, Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force. I'm cipher officer on his Staff with the rank of Captain, having left London at twenty-eight hours' notice. Well, I noticed a day or two ago that he had brought Vol. II of* Sinister Street *to read. So when I was in conversation with him I told him I knew you, etc., and that you had tried for a commission in Egypt. So he said at once, 'Write to him and tell him to get into communication with Eddie Marsh* and get sent out to me as a Marine or anything, and I will find him a job of some kind, sub-cipher officer or something like that.' He says that if I write to you, he will write to Marsh. So there you are. He told me to write to you again to-day, so I am doing it. Our mail went the day before yesterday and when the next will go I can't say. But if you take the opportunity and feel up to it do come. The*

*Edward Howard Marsh, C.B., C.M.G., C.V.O.

*General Staff are a charming set of people, and the possibilities of this show are romantic to a degree.*

In a copy of the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, which has never been a full arm's length away from my desk since I bought it in 1911 there is a torn half-sheet of notepaper. On one side is written :

*Marsh, Admiralty, London.*
*Am applying for commission Mediterranean Expedition. Think Sir Ian Hamilton has written to you. He promises a Staff job if I'm sent out as Marine or anything. Letter follows.*

*Compton Mackenzie,*
*Capri.*

On the other is written :

*Guy and Worrall about poems.*
*Guy and Richard about Margaret.*
*The Birthday : the poems.*
*Working at journalism.*
*May love ; May dawns.*
*Arrival of Michael.*
*Night Meetings.*

*June* *Pauline at tea with Richard.*
*Jealousy.*
*Guy to go up to town.*

*July* *?*

This shows that when the stirring letter arrived from Egypt with the Alexandria postmark I had reached page 270 of my book. I have never worked with such concen-

tration in my life as I worked at the last hundred-and-twenty-five pages of *Guy and Pauline*. The telegram, of which the draft was scrawled on the back of some notes for the construction of the last third of the book, would warn Eddie Marsh, and I might hope to hear of my commission in not less than a fortnight. I had not counted on the vigilance of Italian neutrality. On the very next day I was informed by the Naples post-office that my telegram addressed Marsh, Admiralty, London, had been stopped by the political censorship.

However, on the fourteenth of April this telegram arrived :

*Lieutenant Marines await instructions for Hamilton*
*Marsh*

And some days afterward this welcome reply to an excited letter of mine reached Capri :

Admiralty,
Whitehall.
*April 14th*, '15.

*I hope you will have got my telegram. Your letter came to-day, and I got you made a Lt. R.M. in record time ! Sir Ian had written to me about you. I thought the only possible plan was to telegraph to him to send you instructions, and to you to await them, as I didn't know where to tell you to report yourself. As for uniform, God knows where you will get one, but I suppose you can scratch up something that will do when you get there.*

*I hope you will have started before this arrives, so I won't write a long letter, but I must say how much I enjoyed your 2nd volume.*

*Yours,*
*E. Marsh.*

What between trying to finish the book and grow a military moustache, suffering agonies from neuritis and imagining all the various obstacles that might prevent my helping to force the Dardanelles (our intention to do which was by now a topic of the Italian papers) I wonder I did not go permanently off my head. I was actually delirious with pain for the whole of a night and a day and, being under the impression that the Turks had landed and attacked some property of mine in Capri, I was with some difficulty restrained by my wife and an old friend from sallying forth in my pyjamas to deal with them.

I was duly gazetted on April 23rd ; but no orders came. Perhaps it was just as well, for I was finishing *Guy and Pauline* in bed and if I had set out then, as I certainly should, I might never have got nearer to Gallipoli than Naples. To add to my agony of mind and body came the news of the landing. I can see the headlines in the *Mattino* now. *GALLIPOLI SAREBBE GIÀ OCCUPATO ?* ' Good heavens ! ' I groaned, ' we shall be in Constantinople before I get my orders.'

In answer to a despairing telegram from me, Eddie Marsh replied :

*Advise waiting have wired Hamilton*

I learnt afterwards that Sir Ian Hamilton had made every effort to get me sent out in time to sail with him to Mudros. Alas, my unimportant self was as hard to extract out of the authorities as those precious munitions, of which he was in such urgent need.

The problem of a uniform and equipment which had seemed to Eddie Marsh insoluble except by God was solved by what to my then overheated fancy did appear to be a Divine intervention. There came to Capri an English officer who had been invalided out of a battalion of Kitchener's Army. He had brought with him a Wolseley valise

with Jaeger sleeping-blanket and waterproof-sheet, a Webley pistol and fifty cartridges, six khaki shirts, a pair of puttees, and a pair of Bedford-cord breeches. He was hoping to get back into the Army after a winter in the South; but he sympathetically sold me what was left of his kit, and my adventure seemed a little nearer attainment in spite of the breeches' losing their exquisite cut by being just too big for me and so making it impossible to give the puttees a soldierly trimness. I finished *Guy and Pauline* on the last day of April; but owing to my infernal sciatica we could not have a dinner-party to celebrate the event until the fourth of May. It is difficult in the light of later knowledge not to invest such an occasion with an undue significance, not to fancy that the mind misgave some consequence yet hanging in the stars really did bitterly begin his fearful date with that night's revels. But I could not honestly claim that when the guests bade me good-bye that night I had the least premonition they were saying good-bye to somebody whom they would never see again. Looking back at that party from the present, I can recognize that it marked the end of a period in my life; but at the time it seemed to be just the end of another jolly evening. By now our friends in Capri had begun to think that my commission in the Marines was a fiction, my departure to the Dardanelles a dream; and I was nearly beginning to think so myself. But the next morning the longed-for telegram arrived. I was to proceed immediately to Alexandria and there report to the Base Commandant for orders. Turning over some old papers the other day, I came across a sheet of notepaper on which was written:

*May* 5. '15.

*My dear Martin:*

*My orders have come*

Nothing else.

I suppose I was unable to write Secker my news on account of the urgency of packing at once when the telephone message came from Naples that a steamer was leaving for Alexandria the following afternoon. That meant I should have to be away from the house by four o'clock next morning to catch the boat to Naples.

Casa Solitaria, where we had lived since our return to Capri the previous autumn, is a white house built among fantastic limestone crags half-way up an almost sheer cliff eight hundred feet above the sea. It will seem a magical abode to the passer-by even upon a day of drenching *scirocco;* how magical it seemed to me upon that azurous May dawn I could never hope to tell. Drifts of snow-white cistus in the hollows of that stupendous cliff; wreaths of snow-white cloud round Monte Sant'Angelo on the mainland opposite, snow-white at first, but gradually assuming the carnation of living flesh; towering wraiths of the remote Apennine miles away across the Salernian gulf; the spurge, on the slopes above that narrow path cut along the side of the precipice, already dying in dolphin hues at the first hint of the summer sun; no sign of humanity except that white house and those empty columned terraces against the pale blue sea of the morning, and framed in one of those windows my wife waving to me as I limped round the corner and reached the comparative sophistication of the Via Tragara . . . but this is all as incommunicable as sleep.

On the Piazza, though it was not yet five o'clock, there was a good deal of kissing of my hand and cheeks by Caprese friends of every age and station, some of whom had walked all the way from Anacapri to bid me '*Buon viaggio e presto ritorno!*' Being mercifully free from the least embarrassment under such demonstrations of Southern kindliness, I was able to disappear into the funicular with the bouquets I had been given by those dear people as coolly as a prima donna into the wings. My friend Domenico

Ruggiero, or Mimi as he is generally called, came with me to Naples. He was, and he still is, the chief gardener of Capri. I wish everyone could have a companion like Mimi for such occasions. Intelligence beamed from his eyes: sympathy flowed from the tips of his expressive fingers. With the manners of a diplomat, the appearance of a genial brigand in an opera, and the gestures of an orator, he could manage malmaisons as less gifted gardeners might be able to manage dandelions. He was a raconteur of the first order: he was as good a judge of character as he was of plants: he could cook a plate of *maccheroni* with anybody: he was—but one day I shall write a whole book about him.

We found when we reached Naples that the steamer for Alexandria was to leave at five o'clock the following afternoon, which allowed me plenty of time for limping round the shops to buy the various things I fancied might be useful adjuncts to the siege of Constantinople. I have a note that the fare to Alexandria was two hundred and sixty-six liras and sixty centesimi, or about ten guineas, and I have another note that when I sailed from Naples there were only six hundred and thirty-seven liras left in the bank. It was as well I had finished *Guy and Pauline*. Among other tasks I had to perform during those two sweltering days was getting photographed for my passport. The result was ghastly, and the self-conscious alarm I began to feel at the prospect of appearing before General Headquarters of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force became painful. The Capri barber's attempt to cut my hair to a shortness that might propitiate the natural prejudice of the military against novelists had merely produced a capital imitation of a German tourist on his Capri honeymoon, and the moustache, which had been grown as a kind of earnest of that uniform whose whereabouts according to Eddie Marsh only God knew, was obviously the moustache

of one who had never had any previous experience of moustaches.

"Do I really look like this?" I asked Sidney Churchill, our Consul-General, who looked like an ancient Assyrian himself. And he who was not prone to respect appearances, even he shook his head doubtfully. Poor Sidney Churchill! The Anglo-Neapolitan bourgeoisie succeeded in persuading the Foreign Office to transfer him to Lisbon a year or two later, and after losing his eyesight he died of a broken heart. I wish the English old maids whose gossip ruined his end such an ignominious poverty as will match their own mean imaginations. Churchill was a man who did not suffer fools with the gladness that is expected of a British Consul, and he despised too obviously the disloyalty and envy of some of his subordinates. It was Norman Douglas who introduced me to him as he has introduced me to many of the good things of this world, and Churchill was like a savoury dish such as you only get in countries where the sun is really hot.

The *Roma* was sailing on a Friday; but Mimi discovered some compensation for the bad omen in the fact that it was the Feast of Our Lady of Pompeii. So he secured two of her medals, hung them on fine silver chains, gave me one for an amulet, and took the other home to my wife. He also brought on board a large bunch of deep crimson carnations which he divided into half. '*Per voi e per la signora*,' he told me. He had to leave Naples at half-past three in the hope of reaching Casa Solitaria in time to see the steamer go through the *bocca*—the three miles of sea, that is, which divides Capri from the mainland of the Sorrentine peninsula. In case Mimi should not arrive in time I sent a telegram to say that the *Roma* would pass about half-past six o'clock and that she would be recognized by her black, blue, and white funnel.

However, Mimi had been watching up on the terrace of

Casa Solitaria for a long time before the *Roma* did actually pass. Indeed, it was already dusk when after crossing the Bay of Naples in a scarlet sunset we sailed between the Cape of Campanella and the thousand-feet cliffs of Capri; but though it was already too dark to distinguish the figures that were waving from the terrace I could see the flag. No doubt that old flag was committing a breach of etiquette by flying after sundown; but I was glad to see the lion rampant on his field of gold glimmering against the empty egg-shell whiteness of the house.

I went forward and waved my hat to the moth-dim figures on the terrace; but the light was dying as swiftly as the *Roma* was gliding past, and Casa Solitaria faded like a ghost upon the battlements of Elsinore. The lamps in the clustered houses on the south side came into view, with the island soaring in jagged pinnacle on pinnacle against the last embers of the sunset. Nobody who has not approached Capri from the south can have the least idea of the island's architectural magnificence. The view of it from the Bay of Naples is comparatively tame. I sat on a coil of rope in the bows and watched that great Gothic shape turn to a dark cloud along the horizon. The *faro* on the point of Campanella shone out across the calm sea. I was remembering the sunny March day when we had first explored that promontory and the wild sweet-peas we gathered there and the little votive heads of Minerva in *terra cotta* which may still be found among the rubbish of centuries. I was wondering how the great Temple of Minerva had looked to sailors coming with the corn-ships from Alexandria to feed Rome and how I would look on the way to Constantinople unless I was delayed long enough in Alexandria to be able to get hold of some kind of uniform. And then a twinge in the sciatic nerve reminded me that the last place I ought to be sitting, if I wanted to be cured of my limp before I landed, was on a coil of rope in the bows of a steamer an

hour after sunset. So I went below and studied my fellow passengers in the saloon. There were very few of them in the first-class and not many more in the second. The only British subject was an Austrian Jew from Alexandria who was bringing back a French wife he had just married. The woman was all lipstick and white kid boots, with eyelashes like baskets. The man related, in the same tone of malicious glee as the petty gentry in a provincial town will give you a scandal about some county family which has ignored them, how the Turks had actually crossed the canal once and had only been driven back with a good deal more difficulty than people outside Egypt had been allowed to know. Personally he did not think Alex. was at all a healthy place just now and as soon as he had seen through some business he had on hand he intended to take his wife back to France.

"And what about the Dardanelles?" I asked a little contemptuously. "I fancy you'll be able to sleep soundly enough in Alexandria."

He turned on me a pair of lacklustre protruding eyes, and tittered. "You don't think they'll ever force the Dardanelles, do you?"

"My only fear is they'll be through before I get there."

He tittered again.

"Well, if that's your only fear," he sneered, "you can sleep soundly anywhere in the world."

I had no more conversation with him all the time we were on board except to inquire the name of the best tailor in Alexandria, and in justice to the objectionable fellow I am bound to admit that he did give me the right answer.

Besides this young married couple there were two Italian merchants who ate a great deal of *maccheroni* and talked about money, a young Spaniard from Barcelona, and a young Greek from Geneva. The Spaniard was travelling for his firm; but what he was buying or selling or what his

name was I cannot remember. He was a personable young man of about twenty-two with a slim waist set off by matador's trousers and very small feet of which he was evidently proud, for he had encased them in patent-leather shoes with white canvas uppers. He used to sit back in a deck-chair and make those two feet of his bob and curtsy to one another by the hour, himself regarding them the while with unending interest. The Greek, whose name I also forget, was a pleasant and intelligent young man. He was in partnership with his father as a watchmaker and was visiting relatives in Alexandria.

The Spaniard, the Greek, and myself played dominoes that first night, while the Spaniard in husky French related his triumphs in the *casas de putas* of Barcelona. I woke next morning, being Saturday, the eighth of May, to the sight of Stromboli rising from a dancing blue sea in the round frame of the cabin port. Why that picture should be as clear to-day as on that morning I saw it for a brief minute I do not know. But so it is, and whenever I read Homer it springs to my inner vision and sums up within the brass circumference of a port the whole of the Odyssey. The cabin was full of cockroaches; but they seemed so intelligent that I was able to watch their busy peregrinations without disgust. They were curiously polite creatures, seldom passing one another without an exchange of courtesies. I fed them with crumbs in the furthest corner of the cabin to ward off any possible inclination on their part to explore my bunk and they seemed to appreciate such consideration, for I was not disturbed by them. We only stayed at Messina an hour, and after leaving it in glorious blue weather ran into a *scirocco* which took all the colour out of the water and made such a nasty swell that I regarded Etna with jaundiced eyes and thought how wise it had been to choose Capri for a home instead of Taormina. Catania, which we reached about five o'clock, was full of dust and

wind and men in black suits. I was glad to leave it. We did not call at Syracuse, but I read Thucydides until I found the swell of the *scirocco* too much for my powers of construing. However, on Sunday the *scirocco* vanished, and we sailed eastward through sparkling weather. The Spaniard, the Greek and myself played deck quoits, at which the Spaniard in spite of the tightness of his shoes excelled. Chess and dominoes passed away the evening. The next day we came in sight of Crete and steamed along some forty miles of savage and desolate coast. Later on two turtle-doves picked us up, blown out to sea from the island, and a swallow clung twittering to the stays for a little while. During our games on deck the Spaniard's prowess had attracted the attention of a decayed Neapolitan cocotte in the second-class. The effect of her warm glances and the photographs he had bought in Catania was too much for him, and that night he set out to an assignation, from which we welcomed him back with whatever snatches of *Don Giovanni* the musical Greek could play on a mandolin he had bought in Catania for eight francs.

In Sicily the rumour of the sinking of the *Lusitania* had reached us, and the two Italian merchants were convinced that this would mean the entrance of their country into the war. The desire was so strong in me for Italy to come in that I remember with what respect I listened to their estimate of the political situation, and with what eagerness I was willing to believe them to be the possessors of exceptional knowledge.

## CHAPTER III

### GETTING A UNIFORM

WE dropped anchor in the harbour of Alexandria early on Wednesday morning, the twelfth of May. Just before the examination of passports took place on board the Spaniard asked me if I would mind taking charge of his pistol as he was afraid it would be seized by the authorities. He said he would call for it later at the Hotel Majestic where I was going to put up. I had fondly imagined, when Sidney Churchill stated on my passport that the purpose of my travelling to Alexandria was to join up with the Dardanelles expedition, that I should be hurried through the Customs not merely with despatch, but perhaps even with a certain enthusiastic courtesy. However, the typical English fiction that the Egyptians were really ruling themselves meant that all those great Customs sheds, stretching it seemed almost indefinitely along the quays, were entirely in the hands of a number of maddening middle-aged Egyptians, on whom my explanation of the reason for carrying a large pistol in my kit-bag evidently made a most unfavourable impression. A huge black-faced ruffian seemed much inclined to drag me off to jail forthwith. The argument went on for three solid hours, the sun getting hotter and hotter every moment. Finally an English official was unearthed somewhere, and this So-and-so Bey (I forget his name), instead of kicking these fat, insolent, inefficient brutes, as I had hoped he would, must palaver with them for another hour before they would give up the pistol and another half-

hour before they would surrender the rest of my kit. It was eleven o'clock before a fat man who looked like Emil Jannings in a film of the Arabian Nights signed my release from this stupid farce and I was able to drive away from the quay to the Hotel Majestic, more firmly convinced than ever that some of the English really must be descended from the Lost Tribes of Israel. I began to be less indignant with the muddle at the Customs when I discovered that nobody in Alexandria knew where the Base of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force was to be found, though a consensus of rumour agreed that if it existed at all it might be found in the Mustapha Barracks. So I boarded a tram and went charging along a glittering garish boulevard in search of the M.E.F. and its Commandant. There was a middle-aged Australian on the seat in front, who after hearing me ask the conductor several times if I got off here for the Mustapha Barracks, turned round and said :

" I'm going there myself, mate. You come along with me, and I'll show you."

I noticed that his foot was bandaged, and he told me that he had been wounded on some bloody beach of which he didn't know the bloody name any more than anybody else as far as he could see.

My own blood warmed to this middle-aged Australian who was the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. He confided in me that he was probably ' for it ' when he met the doctor. He had been given an hour's leave from hospital and had extended it to twenty-four.

" You know? I couldn't bring myself to go back, and then I met . . . oh, well, it doesn't always do, does it, to go into details ? Anyway, I've had a night of it, and now I'll have to report to the Doctor. I expect there'll be trouble, but he's a good sort."

I asked him about the landing at Gallipoli, but he could tell me nothing about it. All he knew was that he had

jumped out of a bloody boat in the dark and before he had walked five bloody yards he had had a bloody bullet in his foot and had been pushed back to bloody Alexandria, almost before he bloody well knew he had left it. I told him I was on my way to join Sir Ian Hamilton's Staff and explained why I had no uniform at present.

"Why don't you put in for me as your batman?" he suggested. "You haven't got one yet, have you? I'm fifty-three years old, but when this bloody foot of mine's all right again I'll be able to look after you well."

I told him I should be delighted to have his services if the authorities would grant them to me, and asked him to try to come along and see me at the Majestic.

Then we got off the tram and walked up the dusty road to the barracks, outside which we shook hands affectionately before he hobbled away to report to the Doctor and explain his night out as best he could. I never saw him again. I daresay he was confined to barracks till they sent him back to Anzac. When I finally reached G.H.Q. I made several attempts to get hold of him; but I never succeeded in tracing his whereabouts. It has always been a regret that he never became my batman, for he had knocked about all over the Pacific and would have been a splendid companion.

Even in the Mustapha Barracks, it took a long time to find the office of the Base Commandant, for none of the khaki figures I tackled seemed to believe that the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force existed. However, I found it at last, and inside was a disagreeable little Major sitting like a spider in a dim corner.

"What do you want?" he growled.

I explained that Sir Ian Hamilton had ordered me to report to him for the purpose of reaching General Headquarters of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force as soon as possible.

As he seemed to think I was an itinerant impostor, I produced Eddie Marsh's telegram, which with an expression of profound disgust he read through.

"Who is this fellow who signs this?"

"Mr. Winston Churchill's private secretary."

The Major snorted impatiently.

"I never heard of him. I don't recognize an irregular document like this. What is it?"

"It's an Italian telegram."

"It may or may not be. Anyway, I can't do anything about it."

I began to get a little irritated.

"Well, perhaps you will be good enough to telegraph to G.H.Q. and get them to confirm these orders."

"Why should I communicate with G.H.Q.? I don't recognize this telegram as orders from anybody. I don't know who you are."

"Well, can I telegraph to Sir Ian Hamilton myself?"

"No, you can't."

"Then am I to remain indefinitely in Alexandria?"

"I don't care where you remain."

The dread of missing the fall of Constantinople made me try to propitiate this discouraging little fellow.

"Well, can you give me any idea how long I am likely to remain here?"

"I can't give you the least idea of anything. It may be for two months. It may be for ever."

"Well, do you think I am justified in ordering a uniform?"

"That is for you to decide," he told me. "But you won't get one if you do order it."

There was evidently nothing more to be learnt from the Major, and I debated with myself the question of how to take leave of him. Let it be remembered that I was wearing a blue flannel suit and a panama hat. In such an attire I

certainly ought not to have saluted him ; but by this time I was so thoroughly depressed about my future that, when I half put out my hand to shake hands without getting any response from the Major, I fancy in my embarrassment I did give a kind of indeterminate military salute. There seems to come to my mind as I look back on the scene a grim smile on the Major's face as I left him in his dusty little solitude in the heart of the Mustapha Barracks. A few pages back I was congratulating myself on being able to deal with southern demonstrativeness without the slightest embarrassment ; in dealing with English undemonstrativeness I have never been so successful. At the time I considered the Major a churlish fellow and would willingly have seen him kicked from one end of Alexandria to the other ; but no doubt there was much to be said from his point of view. Probably he resented being left behind at the Base, especially the Base of an expedition which was openly spoken of with contempt all over Egypt; and for an amateur with a moustache like mine to be so sure that his services were required by Sir Ian Hamilton may well have been galling to a professional soldier.

My next task was to find the tailor recommended by the pop-eyed Levantine on board the *Roma*. I entered his shop in much the same mood as I entered the shop of my first Oxford tailor to buy a gown. I made no pretence of being anything else but a freshman and I tried to suggest my conviction that as a tailor of repute he would not betray my innocence. Mr. Phillips smiled with a weary courtesy when I suggested the possibility of being fitted out within a week. He could not promise anything under a month, such an amount of work had he on hand. However, I pleaded with him so eloquently that at last he agreed to give me a fitting the following morning at eleven o'clock. I ordered two light khaki tunics, two pairs of breeches, and two pairs of slacks. He told me the address of a shop where

I might possibly get a Sam Brown belt, and he was actually able himself to supply me with a cap and a helmet thanks to the arrival of a consignment that morning. He did not think, however, that I should be able to obtain badges of my corps anywhere in Alexandria, which took the gilt off the ginger-bread of my new cap.

After this I went back to the Hotel Majestic and decided that of all the god-forsaken garish holes on earth the Hotel Majestic was the worst. I spent a depressed afternoon and evening, wondering how long I should have to sit in that lobby and watch wounded soldiers limp slowly past in the square, wondering whether the trees were *Jacaranda mimosifolia*, listening to the exasperating syncopation of the clatter outside by the swing-doors, and eyeing the antics of a trio of monkey-faced musicians as they played *Get Out or Get Under* from a dais at the end of the dining-room. Yeomanry officers all beautifully equipped kept arriving to dine at the hotel, and I began to hope that I might see one or two old Oxford friends ; but nobody I knew appeared. At last a young officer in the Australian Light Horse who was evidently feeling as much out of it as I was myself spoke to me, and we agreed to dine together. He confided that he simply could not stand the sight of English officers, and added that, if he had the choice of fighting the English or the Turks, he was in two minds whether he would not choose to fight against the English. He had not been up at the Dardanelles yet, but his brigade was expecting to go at any moment. Every exquisite young Yeomanry subaltern who passed our table stared at my new acquaintance as if to demand by what right this colonial fellow was venturing to sit down to dine in an hotel patronized by him. Presently, however, four Australian troopers, each of them carrying a penny in his right eye like a monocle, swaggered into the room and ordered four bottles of champagne, after disposing of which they ordered four more and then pro-

ceeded in loud voices to give their impressions of the manners, customs, and speech of the Yeomanry. The performance lacked some of the restraint of modern acting, and erred occasionally on the side of exaggeration; but it cheered up my companion, and he talked to me happily about life at home.

Next morning at nine o'clock I went round to the tailor's and stayed in his shop till one o'clock when I actually got a fitting. In the afternoon my friends of the *Roma* turned up. The Spaniard's shoes were too much altogether for the Yeomanry subalterns. So the Australian officer and I took him and the Greek out to dinner at a café, after which we visited a cinema and variety show where a young woman leapt about the stage and sang *Get Out or Get Under*, being encored till her voice was nothing but a husky squeak. I got back to the hotel about midnight and found waiting for me in my bedroom a letter in a buff envelope inscribed *On His Majesty's Service* and addressed in red pencil to *Lieutenant Compton Mackenzie, R.M. Please arrange to embark on the Franconia, Berth* 46, it read. *She is due to sail at* 8 *a.m. to-morrow, May* 14*th. Please report to General Braithwaite C.G.S. on arrival.* The signature at the bottom was that of my discouraging little Major. I found that an orderly had brought this letter round to the Majestic half an hour earlier.

I was now in a pretty state of anxiety to know how I was possibly going to induce any Alexandria tradespeople before eight o'clock in the morning to part with the minimum still necessary to my equipment. The half-made uniforms I should obviously have to leave behind and I might never see them again. Could I persuade my friend the tailor to part with somebody else's service-jacket to me? To add to my gloom the damp night air of Alexandria had brought on a good deal of pain in my leg, and the dark, hot little bedroom was full of mosquitoes. The situation

demanded desperate measures. I went downstairs and, seeing in the lobby a Captain of the Gyppy Army with a pleasant oblong face, I gulped down my embarrassment and asked him to tell me whether he thought I could count on the transport's not leaving before ten o'clock. That would give me an hour to drive round Alexandria after the shops opened at eight. The Captain said that, while he had never heard of a transport's leaving at the hour fixed, he would not advise me to trust to that and urged me to be down on the quay at the time given. I went back to my bedroom so profoundly depressed that when a cockroach flew across the room and hit me on the ear I felt like bursting into tears. Finally I went downstairs again and interviewed the porter. Did he think if I started telephoning to the shops at six o'clock in the morning I should get any reply? He seemed doubtful; but on my producing a ten-shilling note he agreed to help me in every way he could to rouse them. I had decided, if I could not get a service-jacket anywhere, to buy a burberry and hide my blue coat and waistcoat with that. Then by dint of winding and unwinding my puttees about twenty times over I managed to make the Bedford-cord breeches I had bought in Capri look less as if I had stolen them from a heavy-weight. Having once fixed those puttees, I thought it would be imprudent to risk undressing again. So I lay down in my clothes and tried to sleep for an hour or two.

At five o'clock I was up again without having had a wink, and by six I was telephoning. It was a hopeless business. Not a shop in Alexandria would answer. Seven o'clock found me in a carriage outside the chief military emporium waiting for the shutters to be taken down. My driver, a tall black fellow, who evidently enjoyed making a nuisance of himself, banged on the shutters with the butt of his whip until finally a shrivelled little man with a sharp nose, on whose dyspeptic Cockneyism the sun of Egypt had beaten

down impotently, opened the door at a quarter to eight and asked in an aggrieved voice what I thought I was playing at. I did not argue, but rushed inside and bought a flaccid shop-soiled burberry which I at once put on, though even at that early hour of the morning the sun was hot. Then I asked for a Sam Brown belt and was assured that there was not one to be had, but he added that if I would give him my name he would do his best to obtain one for me in the course of the next few weeks. I snatched up a belt from the counter and sternly asked him the price of it.

"But that is one we have had on order for over a month for General Blank," he whined apprehensively.

My answer was to fling down three sovereigns on the counter, rush out of the shop with the Sam Brown, leap into the carriage, and drive off at full speed to my friend the tailor. After we had banged for ten minutes on his door he opened it. My entreaties were vain: he had no service-jacket of any size finished. However, he did promise to send my own things up to G.H.Q. in ten days' time, and with that I had to be content. I found it was going to take at least twenty minutes to drive to the quay where the *Franconia* was lying; and as I write these words a fat drum-shaped clock overhanging the pavement, the hands at ten minutes past eight already, still stares at me in the lucid relentless air.

I have had one or two hair-raising drives in nightmares, but no nightmare ever exceeded in horror my drive to the docks of Alexandria on that May morning. The endless line of funnels and masts along the quays gave an impression that, however furiously the horse galloped, the carriage itself was not moving at all. We passed warehouse after warehouse, shed after shed; but each was so exactly like its predecessor that again one had an impression of movement without progress. Every hoot I heard seemed to be the signal for the *Franconia's* departure. I began to

imagine that my driver had no idea at which dock the *Franconia* was to be found and that he was merely driving about at random, hoping to come on it by some happy accident. I stood up and surveyed the fearful hugger-mugger of funnels, which was apparently infinite. Then, catching sight of a clock which marked five-and-twenty minutes to nine, I sat down again in despair, closed my eyes against that cat's cradle of masts, and began to compose in fancy another interview with my discouraging little Major in the Mustapha Barracks, in which I explained to him how I had failed to embark on the *Franconia* and implored him to tell me when the next transport was leaving.

Five minutes later we drew up alongside the great Cunarder, which looked like a Gulliver over whom Lilliputians in khaki were wandering aimlessly. She might not have been leaving Alexandria for another month for any signs of immediate departure apparent, and then as I stood on the quayside, the burberry buttoned close to hide my blue coat and waistcoat, a private in the First Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers came up to me and saluting asked if I wanted a servant.

" I'm helping Captain Kenny," he said, " but I could give you a hand in my spare time."

" I suppose you can't get hold of a service-jacket ? " I asked. " I feel a bit awkward in this blue coat and waistcoat."

" I could get you a service-jacket from Army Stores for ten shillings. Lots of officers prefer to wear them instead of their own so as to dodge the snipers."

How easy it all seemed, now that a professional had taken the matter in hand!

" Were you by any chance in Crete with the Inniskillings —in 1909, I think it was ? " I asked him.

" Yes, sir, I was in Crete."

"You don't remember a brother of mine by any chance who was a subaltern in the regiment? F. S. Mackenzie was his name."

"Yes, sir, I remember him well. In fact I was his servant for a short time. Ginger hair, hadn't he?"

The coincidence of this cheered me up. Ten minutes afterwards he came back with a Tommy's service-jacket and superintended the transfer of my kit from the carriage to the cabin, where I doffed the blue flannel coat and waistcoat. My appearance in uniform was not exactly my own idea of what a smart officer's should be, but I decided it would make a better impression on G.H.Q. than the circus proprietor's get-up in which I had arrived to go on board the *Franconia*. All this preoccupation with my outward appearance at such an hour must sound petty; but from the moment I landed in Alexandria I became what I was supposed to be—a subaltern of nineteen joining his regiment for the first time. That somebody called Compton Mackenzie had written two or three successful books was no help to my present self at all. I regarded that pre-commission self as an uncle with whom I might claim kinship when I was sure of my company, not as a matter for pride, but as an excuse for any eccentricity still discernible in his nephew. I fancy that this reversion to a younger self was more common among temporary officers than the reminiscences and novels of the war would lead one to suppose. For the last ten years I have been on the verge of writing about Gallipoli and continually laying aside my pen because I have never seemed able to achieve the necessary detachment. Now I have come to the conclusion that I never shall achieve such detachment, and that I must be content with the less ambitious task of recapturing the emotions and excitements and embarrassments of one insignificant individual against the background of that heroic tragedy.

## CHAPTER IV

### LOOKING FOR G.H.Q.

AFTER that nerve-racking drive to catch the transport it is perhaps unnecessary to add that she did not actually sail until three o'clock in the afternoon. The *Franconia* was one of the large Cunarders, eighteen or twenty thousand tons, I think, and, so far at any rate as the food was concerned, life aboard her in time of war was very much what it had been in time of peace. I have a menu card before me, as I write, of luncheon on board that Saturday, May 15th, 1915. These menus were printed on postcards in old days to allow travellers to let their friends and relations know how well they were faring in a Cunard liner, and war seemed to have touched with a light hand the routine on board. I found myself seated at table in the dining-saloon with a trio of doctors, two of whom were R.A.M.C. regulars and the third a distinguished specialist in temporary uniform. They had all been at the landing on the Twenty-fifth of April. I happened to ask why we had been given second-class cabins.

"I'll show you why after lunch," said one of them.

Getting hold of a key from the steward, he took me along and opened the door of what looked exactly like a Bluebeard's Chamber. From floor to ceiling the white cabin was splashed with blood.

"We brought back five thousand wounded in this ship, and they haven't had time to clear up the relics. The worst

cases were in the first-class cabins and there were only three of us to attend to them."

I began to understand why my three messmates had talked of everything at meals except the landing.

We steamed north at full speed, for a wireless message had been received that two German submarines of the latest pattern had passed the Straits of Gibraltar some time since and might be met at any moment. In consequence of this warning we had lifebelt and boat drill. After three false alarms for practice hardly anybody on board found himself in the same boat twice, and there would have been a glorious muddle if we had been hit by a torpedo.

I felt less ashamed of my service-jacket when a young subaltern in the Essex Regiment congratulated me on my prudence and told me he was going to get one for himself as soon as he went ashore. I tried to look as if it had been the cunning of a seasoned warrior which had prompted my choice, but Kenny with whom unknown as yet to himself, I believe, I was sharing a servant, shook his head gravely over my appearance. Kenny had been A.D.C. to the new Sultan of Egypt, and his Royal Master, desiring to pay Sir Ian Hamilton a compliment, had put him at Sir Ian's disposal for the rest of the campaign. I think it was just a slight doubt in Kenny's own mind whether Sir Ian would welcome his services or send him back to Cairo at the first opportunity which at this date made him tolerate my company at all. But on hearing that I was, like himself, bound for G.H.Q., and finding nobody else on board who was bound thither he decided to make the best of my disgraceful get-up and, though evidently still a little puzzled about my social status, he did manage to be fairly cordial. I found that he had not done any regimental service with the Inniskilling Fusiliers for a long time and that he had not been at Crete or Malta when my brother was there with the First Battalion.

On Saturday evening the Army Service Corps Colonel who was Commanding Officer on board handed me a packet of the men's letters to read through and censor. From them the following, which was sprawled in pencil over several sheets of toilet paper, has remained in my memory since the evening I first read it in the fern-filled ladies' saloon of the *Franconia*:

*Dear Perce, Flo and Susie,*

*We have now been in the trenches under shot and shell for ten days, and it's something terrible I give you my word and no mistake. The noise is absalutely deafning. Enough to make your hair curl. We do not get a moment's sleep all night. We are now well in for it with the Terrible Turk, who by all accounts is a proper Bugar and no mistake. No more bloody armies for me. The next bloody army I join is the Salvation bloody army and don't you forget it.*

*Kind regards to Ma.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Father.*

We heard later that night that we should be off Cape Helles the following morning by six o'clock, and the three doctors with whom I messed began to speculate whether Krithia would be found to have fallen or whether Achi Baba would still be frowning defiance at our troops. They were the only officers on board who had seen the Peninsula yet ; the others were all going out for the first time, some of them in charge of small drafts, some joining units to which they had been transferred from other regiments. One of the latter, a Captain in the Indian Army, told me that after twelve years' dull service he was looking forward to the excitement of Gallipoli. He went ashore with the first boat next morning and had not moved fifty yards from the pier when a high-explosive shell burst close to him and

the next day he was carried back on board from a field-hospital, insensible and suffering from severe concussion, the first of the new lot of wounded to be evacuated and taken back to Alexandria in the *Franconia*. A small man he was, with a little round head like a button and a neat moustache as glossy as jet.

We all crowded forward in the bows to stare through our glasses at that astonishing sight which has been so often and so eloquently described. I felt that I was watching some arrangement of a martial scene in the window of a toy-shop, some artful method for displaying all the toy soldiers and toy boats, all the toy tents and trees and forts in stock, to their best advantage; and just as the colours of toys are always a little brighter than nature, so were they here. The very puffs of smoke from the shrapnel-bursts seemed much more like the cotton-wool with which the crafty salesman had imitated the real thing than the real thing itself; and we who were gathered up there in the bows were like passengers on the top of a halted omnibus who were gazing down at that shop-window, the polychromatic toy-land in which was irradiating the dull pavement of commonplace existence.

The only glasses I had were a feeble pair I had bought at a pawnbroker's two or three years before on my way to the races at Alexandra Park, at which I was grumbling to myself, when the R.A.M.C. Lieutenant murmured over my shoulder:

"You'll be able to pick up a better pair on the beach. There were plenty of them lying about after the landing."

"Surely that must be one of our howitzers?" some officer ejaculated, whereat the rest of us turned our glasses on a jerky spiral of smoke that fumed up from time to time on the east side of the Peninsula and agreed without much conviction that it must be.

"Well, damn it, that's shrapnel bursting over the beach,

anyway. We don't seem to have advanced quite as far as they think we have in Alexandria."

Several of the present company had been supposing on the voyage up that they should be kept kicking their heels for a week at the Base without arriving anywhere near the scene of action.

"They were expecting to get Krithia the night we came away," said the R.A.M.C. Lieutenant. "I can't make it out."

"Achi Baba looks a nasty bit of work," somebody observed.

We turned our glasses on the hill which stood between us and Constantinople. From here Achi Baba suggested on a much diminished scale the view of Etna from the deck of the *Roma* as I had seen it just a week ago. There was the same effect of shoulders upheaving and set in grim defiance; but, whereas Etna worthily embodied a Titan, this fellow embodied nothing more sublime than a crafty Oriental wizard. His very name was an insult to Troy hidden over there in the blue haze along the Asiatic shore. What was this anachronism doing in Europe? Let Disraeli answer. What is he doing in Europe now? Let the contemptible and pusillanimous Coalition of 1922 answer. Three-quarters of the way up those gradual grey-green slopes there was a large patch of poppies like a lustrous sash of scarlet, an effect which sent my mind spinning back for a moment to a field-day at Aldershot in the month of August, 1901, and to the scarlet of the Home Counties Brigade moving across Laffan's Plain.

In the foreground to right of us huddled the village and forts of Sedd-el-Bahr. The gun-slashed cypresses had from here the look of palms, and the whole place with its cracked domes and crumbled walls was not unlike an old-fashioned print of Paradise in a tattered family Bible.

Kenny and I, being both bound for G.H.Q., decided to

land together. In boatload after boatload our companions of the swift voyage from Alexandria went ashore to disappear in the confusion and tawny dust of Lancashire Landing. To my mind's eye returns the picture of a grave-eyed subaltern of the South Wales Borderers leading his small draft in heavy marching order up the slope beyond the beach. When they vanished over the brow one by one in single file, northward bound for the trenches, it gave a sudden poignant emptiness to the swarming landscape as if the echo of a solemn chord had died away into silence. Kenny and I must have been ashore ourselves when I was watching these pilgrims depart into the unknown, and presently we were asking the way to G.H.Q., expecting it of course to be rather easier to find than the front-line trenches. We were advised to consult the Advanced Base Commandant who invited us to tea, but had no idea at all where G.H.Q. was. Colonel Hawker* was courteous, charming, and hospitable; but at the time he struck me as the most inconsequent human being I had ever met outside the pages of Lewis Carrol. The tea-party of the Mad Hatter and the March Hare was more fruitful of solid information than the tea-party that afternoon in the headquarters of the Advanced Base Commandant. I must not accuse Kenny of trying to 'shake' me; but when he found himself in the company of several officers whom he knew already he was inclined—how shall I put it?—to disclaim all responsibility for my untoward appearance. I sat on a packing-case in a corner of the tent and ate bread and jam with what I feel sure was the air of a fourth-form boy in a prefect's study, listening to a long conversation about the whereabouts of every officer on earth, it seemed, except the Commander-in-Chief to whom we had to report.

Then somebody came in and said that the ammunition for the six Japanese field-mortars had arrived, but that the

*Brig.-Gen. C. J. Hawker, C.M.G., C.B.E.

mortars themselves were undiscoverable. I plucked up courage to say that I had noticed those mortars in the hold of some ship together with a lot of unsorted mail. At the mention of mail everybody got very much worked up, and several officers dashed down to the pier. But it was too late. The mortars and the mail had already started back to Alexandria. I can see those Japanese field-mortars now, looking like large expensive fireworks among a lot of loose envelopes. They had been travelling backward and forward between Helles and Alexandria for nearly a month. After my knowledgeableness on the subject of the mortars I felt justified in pressing Colonel Hawker to find out something definite for us about G.H.Q. He kindly despatched a search-party for an Aide of his who was reputed to know where G.H.Q. was. This officer on being interrogated stated positively that G.H.Q. was at Tenedos.

"Well, how shall we get there?" I asked.

"Ah, how will you get there?" Colonel Hawker repeated ambiguously. Then he called out to another of his Aides: "How will they get there?"

The Aide replied that he had no idea.

"Do you think if they tried the N.T.O.* ?" the Commandant pressed.

"He's not in a very good mood, sir. He was rather fed up about that mail."

"Well, look here, I tell you what," said the Colonel enthusiastically. "You take a stroll up to the top of the slope and have a look round. I think there's probably a battle going on. You ought to see something of it while you're here, and then we'll try and manage something for you when you come back."

When I got Kenny outside the tent, I told him that if we wanted to reach G.H.Q. before dark we should do well to make a move on our own behalf and not bother our heads

*Naval Transport Officer.

about battles. So we went down to the landing-stage and interviewed various people who were ordering boats about with an air of authority. None of them had any idea where G.H.Q. was; but they all agreed that, wherever it was, there was no chance of our reaching it that night. Just then, a Marine on the landing-stage who had overheard our appeals for transport came up and said that somehow or other he had to find a destroyer to take him to the flagship that night and suggested that we should stick to him. I was all in favour of this; but Kenny did not feel quite so sure of his ability to deal with an Admiral. However, I was firm, and insisted on our following the Marine into a pinnace with our batman and our kit. The destroyer would have nothing to do even with the Marine and back we all came to the beach, where he declared in an injured voice that he had done his best and that if the Admiral went off the deep end about his not getting back, the Admiral would have to go off the deep end and that was all about it.

By now the problem was no longer how to reach G.H.Q., but how to get back on board the *Franconia*. We had to hang about for another couple of hours before we found a pinnace willing to take us out to her, by which time it was pitch dark. Then we had to get on board by climbing up a rope-ladder swinging from the stern. This was a beastly experience and frightened me much more than the chance of shells falling on the beach. It must have been at least sixty feet from the water to the deck of that eighteen thousand ton liner, and the ladder had a most horrible trick of becoming horizontal when one tried to relieve the strain on the wrist, by pressing harder with the feet. I was sweating and shaking when we reached the deck, and how our kit was ever hauled on board I never dared ask. Kenny and I were the only two left of those who had gone on board at Alexandria the day before yesterday. We felt like a

couple of ghosts wandering about that huge dim ship. I confided to Kenny how abominably shy I had felt in Colonel Hawker's tent this afternoon. He was sympathetic, and said he knew exactly how I felt. He had felt just the same when he had joined his battalion in South Africa, travelling all the way from Sandhurst and after tremendous difficulties reaching it at last in the field.

"It was dark when I arrived, and they were all in the Mess. I never felt such an ass in my life."

The next day we went ashore again, and on our way to the Advanced Base tent a party of stretcher-bearers with several dead men passed us. They had been killed a few minutes before by a big shell. The Advanced Base was just recovering from this bombardment when we arrived; but in spite of that Colonel Hawker was more cheerful and hospitable than ever. He had just invited us to be sure and come back for lunch when he suddenly remembered why we kept wandering into his tent.

"Of course, you're the two people who want G.H.Q. Well, you'd better hurry down to the landing-stage as quickly as possible, because there's a trawler starting immediately for the aerodrome at Tenedos to tow a broken biplane in a lighter."

We managed to get safely aboard with our kit and found Major Fiennes,* the Intelligence officer of the Naval Division, who with the help of two interpreters was examining a bunch of Turkish prisoners. The Interpreters were both Marine Lieutenants in this dream, but in real life they were English business men from Constantinople. I looked enviously at their laurel-wreathed globes and felt half inclined to ask if either of them had any spares for a badgeless member of their own Corps.

The most cheerful people on board were the prisoners, who were anxious to give all the information they could,

*Lt.-Col. the Hon. Sir Eustace Fiennes, Bt., Governor of the Leeward Islands.

with the air of men enjoying a jolly talk after a long and tiring day. About half-way to Tenedos the wretched lighter broke loose, and an hour went by before it was made fast again. We were hot. We were hungry. There was a slow swell. The plates of the trawler were like oven-doors. The two dogs kept as pets by the crew were messy brutes. The aerodrome was at the farther end of the island, and another hour sweltered by before our signals woke anybody up on shore. At last, however, we got rid of the prisoners and the broken biplane and turned back to the harbour, by which time it was late afternoon. Here we were met by Lieutenant Thompson, R.N.V.R., another member of the British colony in Constantinople, who was the Naval Intelligence officer on Tenedos. How cool and comfortable he looked in his whites, so cool and comfortable that it helped Kenny and me, hungry and hot and queasy as we were, to stand the shock of hearing that G.H.Q. had arrived on Tenedos last Friday in the *Arcadian*, unloaded all their gear, packed it all up again the following day, and left for Imbros. Admiral de Robeck had warned Sir Ian Hamilton that Tenedos was a bad berth for ships and that without the protection of the Navy a band of ruffians might land one night from Bezika Bay on the mainland opposite and cut the throats of the General Staff one by one.

Kenny thought we should be wise to return with the trawler to Helles; but I opposed this. A small fleet of caiques in the port had given me an idea, and I asked what there was to prevent our hiring a motor-boat and going to Imbros in it. Thompson looked doubtful for a moment, but finally he agreed that we might do that to-morrow morning, provided we made an early start, Imbros being twenty-one miles from here. Kenny was still inclined to argue. The notion of arriving at G.H.Q. in a motor-boat somewhat shocked his sense of military decorum; but I was firm and told him that he could go back to W beach if he liked, but

that nothing would induce me to move from where I was. He surrendered to the peace of that golden afternoon, and fussed no more about the trawler's return to Helles with Major Fiennes and the two Interpreters. Here there was no sound but the chattering of the jackdaws on the red roofs. Tenedos, dear of old to Apollo, was Elysian after the hellish racket of W beach and the heat and stench of that trawler in the slow swell. We left our batman to deal with the kit and walked away with Thompson, past the great fifteenth-century Frankish castle, half of which was occupied by British Marines and the other half by the Greek garrison. Apparently the Turks had never formally accepted that clause of the Treaty which handed over various Ægean islands to Greece after the Balkan War of 1912. So by occupying Tenedos we were not violating the neutrality of Greece—an example of that English devotion to nominalism which more realistic feminine nations like the French find so difficult to understand. Thompson told us that the Governor was very ill with pneumonia.

"The Greek Governor?"

But it appeared that the Greek Governor had been dispossessed of his official residence by Major Temple,* a Blue Marine, who had ruled here ever since his ship was sunk on the luckless Eighteenth of March.

We fed with Thompson and a Red Marine Captain who had been saved from the *Irresistible*; but the thought of poor Temple lying so seriously ill upstairs made that barrack of a house depressing, and we were glad to turn in early.

By seven o'clock next morning, being Tuesday, May 18th, we were down at the quay and bargaining with one of the caique owners for a passage to Imbros. The owner was a plump and cheerful little Greek who said he was willing to take us for nothing to Kephalo Harbour

*Maj.-Gen. R. C. Temple, C.B., O.B.E., R.M.A.

where the *Arcadian* was lying with the General Staff on board, if in return we would do our best to secure him a licence to hawk foodstuffs on the Peninsula. However, we insisted that he must name a definite price or not take us at all. Finally the bargain was struck. At this moment three Military Field Police came up and asked if we would take them with us. Major Bigham,* the Provost-Marshal, was expecting them anxiously; but, when they had reached Tenedos, they had found like us that G.H.Q. had departed.

"And I'm in a similar predicament," said a Staff Sergeant-Major, coming up at this moment with a ponderous salute. This was a grave sententious fellow who gave me a good deal of amusement on our voyage. Soon after we started he produced a circlet of those fat amber beads with which the inhabitants of the Levant fiddle perpetually.

"I understand that these beads, sir, do not possess any religious significance," he observed to me.

"I believe none at all."

"It is highly remarkable, sir, is it not, the strange customs with which travel makes one familiar? I find that since I left England my mind has broadened considerably. I was thinking of sending these beads as a present to my married daughter in Balham, and I just wanted to be sure that they did not possess any religious significance, because, though my married daughter in Balham is not by any means superstitious, she might feel uneasy if she had any religious ornaments about the house."

"I hope *you* are not superstitious, Sergeant-Major?"

"No, sir, I've never had any leanings that way. But why do you ask the question, sir?"

"Well, I've just noticed that the number of this boat is thirteen and that there are exactly thirteen people on board."

The skipper had promised to put us alongside the *Arca-*

*Lt.-Col. the Hon. Clive Bigham, C.M.G., now Viscount Mersey.

*dian* by two o'clock. About noon when we were in sight of our destination the engine broke down, and with the wind freshening from the north we did not look like reaching Kephalo or even anywhere in Imbros that night. It was useless to put the caique about and run for Tenedos, because we should have got into the Dardanelles current, which flowing at four knots with the wind would have swept us south of the island and possibly wrecked us on the coast of Asia Minor, not a pleasant notion. The only thing for it was to keep beating up toward Imbros and trust to making land somewhere. The wind got worse, until soon it was blowing a gale. Kenny felt sick and lay down in utter misery. The skipper would keep persuading him to drink some fizzy lemonade from a bottle, and when he turned away from it in loathing the little man produced a box of Turkish-delight.

"Take this bloody fellow away from me," Kenny groaned.

I was sitting up in the prow, trying to swallow all the wind I could in order to ward off sickness. Kenny was prostrate on a heap of kit-bags amidships. He looked like a corpse waiting for the torches to be applied to the pyre. I beckoned to one of the Military Field Police who staggered forward.

"Don't let Captain Kenny be offered any more lemonade or Turkish-delight," I ordered.

The idea of anybody's being offered such nourishment in this sea was too much for the poor chap, who rushed to the side of the boat, where I should soon have followed him if at that moment I had not perceived that we were tossing about right in the course of a huge French transport. I forgot to feel sick and began to wonder how long it was before unconsciousness came to a drowning man. She missed us by not more than half a dozen yards, and as I looked up at the towering shape I saw the white teeth and

jet-black faces of numerous Senegalese soldiers grinning down at us. The churning of her screws as we went astern flung a quantity of water over the caique. Kenny must have thought the genial Greek in command was still trying to force fizzy lemonade down his throat, for in desperation he felt for his pistol and above the drumming of the wind in the stays I heard him threatening the skipper with death.

For six hours we were flung about in that caique, and it began to look as if we should never reach Imbros. We had by now drifted the whole length of the island. Unless we could make the last promontory thirteen miles west of our original destination there would be nothing for it but to run for Lemnos, with the chance of being driven on to a dead lee shore in the darkness or being shot by an excitable French patrol for trying to enter the harbour of Mudros after sunset.

The excitement of watching that westerly promontory of Imbros slip ominously to starboard and then slip back safely to port as the steersman took the caique a point or two nearer the wind kept me from even feeling sick. The long wave line of Imbros which we had watched far away and misty blue in the morning, which we had seen turn to a rich brown and green when we drew near it at noon, was now a neutral grey. And then mercifully the wind abated.

"We will now to be in Purgos," the skipper announced gleefully.

Even Kenny was able to raise a bitter smile at such a name, while the Staff Sergeant-Major who had been yawning uncomfortably for the last six hours observed:

"Nature can be very beautiful, can it not, sir?"

"Feeling better, Sergeant-Major?"

"Oh, I was not feeling sea-sick, sir," he insisted with reproachful gravity. "I've only been slightly troubled with the returns which I get from my indigestion, sir, and

from which I have suffered on and off ever since I was a tiny tot."

Half an hour later we glided into the calm emerald water of a sheltered cove round which the sand lay in a golden crescent, the rich light of the fast westering sun shining upon a blaze of wild hollyhocks and poppies in the grass beyond. We saw two or three houses on the easterly horn of the cove; but what filled us with apprehension were a number of barrels of oil and sacks of coal on the beach. We asked ourselves if we had hit upon some secret base for supplying a German submarine. However, a closer inspection showed that it was only olive oil. The proprietor of the largest house supplied a delicious meal of eggs, and our skipper persuaded a baggy-breeched fellow to set off on a pony over the hills to Kephalo with a message to G.H.Q. to ask if a trawler or any other kind of craft could be spared to rescue us. Kenny was quite himself again after a good meal, and determined now to think that the barrels of oil were as nefarious as our first impression of them had made them out to be. As soon as our camp-beds had been put up on the beach he lowered the spirits of the Military Field Police and his own servant by arranging to have two sentries posted all night. I suggested that he was being somewhat excessively professional and told him that if I were one of his sentries I would fire at the first winkle that put out its horns at me, merely for the pleasure of waking him up; but he said he had no intention of being taken prisoner by a German submarine through neglecting a few elementary precautions. So seeing that Kenny wanted this to be a real adventure I argued no more. Then we got into our sleeping-blankets and lay staring up at the stars until we fell asleep to the sound of water lapping on the sand and the distant croaking of frogs. In the morning we ate a lot more eggs and drank a great deal of excellent coffee, after which we strolled up the grassy brae which formed the eastern

extremity of the cove, and here we sat waiting to be rescued like the shipwrecked mariners of convention.

A flat marshy expanse of tall reeds stretched inland to a line of rugged hills. We speculated on the shooting in the interior, which Kenny thought looked a promising country for partridges. I was more interested in the flowers that were a-blow in myriads on this green brae, particularly in a small cranesbill which was new to me. It must have been about nine o'clock when a torpedo-boat came round the nearest headland, seeming most unnaturally dark against the silver dazzle of the sea. After another two hours of roughish weather we were alongside the *Arcadian*.

Before we left Purgos the skipper of the caique presented me with four boxes of Turkish-delight to mark what he called his appreciation of my coolness yesterday; but I fear it was only a bribe to enlist my sympathy for his sweetmeats and recommend him to the goodwill of the military authorities with a view to unloading on the Peninsula his cargo of Turkish-delight and fizzy lemonade. Still it was jolly good Turkish-delight and much appreciated aboard the *Arcadian*, the sort of tuck in fact with which a new boy ought to arrive well provided.

## CHAPTER V

### THE *ARCADIAN*

WELCOME indeed was the sight of Orlo Williams looking larger than ever in khaki when I stepped on to the deck of the *Arcadian*. It was due to him in the first place that I was here at all. Now he deepened my obligation by the trouble he took to introduce me to everybody on board, and for the kindness with which everybody made me feel at home I knew that I was also in his debt. It was typical of Orlo that he should almost immediately lead me round the ship and analyse for my benefit the composition of the Staff. His accurate mind dreaded the least delay in my education, because any false quantity as it were from my lips would have pained him. He is incapable of letting the most cocksure man make a mistake if he can prevent him, and, knowing as he does exactly how much he knows, he comes as near to being infallible as anyone I have met.

"This is O," he said, showing me . . . what was it, the drawing-room or the smoking-room of the ship at peace? I fancy the former. "O stands for Operations and is immediately under General Braithwaite, the Chief of the General Staff or C.G.S. Here is A, which is the Adjutant-General's branch and deals with all matters of routine, discipline, and administration. Here is Q or the Quartermaster-General's branch, which deals with supplies. And here," he concluded as he showed me the ship's gymnasium, "is I or Intelligence. I is sub-divided into Ia,

which obtains information about the enemy, and Ib, which prevents the enemy from obtaining information about us. I should think you'll probably be in I yourself."

"I's the Ichneumon, a wonderful beast," I quoted to myself from an alphabet of early childhood.

After this we talked about the ultimate future of the Expedition, and of the dreams that might yet be fulfilled. The possibilities were endless according to my old friend. After Constantinople an advance across the plains of Hungary . . . an invasion of Germany from the south-east where she would find it hardest to resist such pressure . . . once Breslau fell . . . but meanwhile they did not seem to comprehend at home the importance of our stroke here. Then I heard the tale of the Landing. After that nothing was impossible if we but could conquer what, alas, was to be a thousand thousand times more inexpugnable than Istambol—the obstinacy of unimaginative men.

It would have been soon after this talk that Sir Ian Hamilton came striding round the deck and that I was presented to him. He must have said something which allowed me without impertinence to ask him why Lord Kitchener did not grasp the difficulties of the enterprise and the full implications of its success, for his next words are cut with a chisel on my heart.

"Lord Kitchener is a great genius, but like every great genius he has blind spots."

As he spoke his eyes turned eastward to the long line of cliffs beyond that dancing deep blue sea, and in one illuminated instant I divined with absolute certainty that we should never take Constantinople. It may be that Sir Ian's own brave hope had been shaken and that the doubt in his mind was conveyed to me. I had no reasonable grounds at that date for pessimism. I had not yet experienced that *insurmountable mental barrier* of which Mr. Winston Churchill was one day to write. *A wall of crystal, utterly*

*immovable, began to tower up in the Narrows, and against this wall of inhibition no weapon could be employed. The 'No' principle had become established in men's minds, and nothing could ever eradicate it.*

It would not be Gallipoli that would reveal to me the fearful profundity of Mr. Churchill's words. I should not learn to appreciate them until I had played my part in the Greek tragedy, on which the curtain had even then already risen. I should be at Gallipoli a mere butterfly in a graveyard.

"I shall expect you at dinner to-night," Sir Ian rapped out, and that thin eager form was off again on its restless promenading. North and east the tawny line of cliffs along a blue horizon. Southward the rolling dunes on which presently the tents of G.H.Q. would be pitched. Westward the soft sandy beach of Kephalo flounced with seaweed for the whole of a weary mile. North-west the rugged hills of Imbros still green with the colour of hope. All around that multiform flotilla in diverse shades of grey. And a man in khaki striding round this deck like a squirrel in a cage.

I did not know that two days ago he had sent a cable to Lord Kitchener which owing to the political situation at home would not be discussed for another three weeks, though upon the answer to it depended the success or failure of this enterprise. I did not know that he had received this very day a private and personal cable from Lord Kitchener, in which the word 'withdrawal' had been mentioned for the first time. I did not know that Sir Henry Wilson had perhaps at this very moment overcome the difficulty of persuading Sir John French to laugh at Hazebrouck; and, since God knows there was little enough to laugh about in France that day, it may have been the problem of the Ægean which coaxed reluctant mirth from the Commander-in-Chief. I did not know that Major

John Churchill had just received a cable from his brother to say that he was to be driven from the Admiralty, but that he hoped to be in a position to help the Expedition indirectly. I did not know that an intriguing chatterbox like Colonel Repington would be bragging round London this afternoon how he (with the help of Captain Stanley Wilson, M.P. !) had overthrown the Liberal Government. I did not know that the leaders of the Unionist Party, barren of policy yet greedy of place and patronage, had taken advantage of this grave hour in their country's destiny to blackmail their rivals into surrendering to them an equal share of the responsibilities and emoluments of office. I did not know that Lord Bertie would write in his diary tonight : *How disgusting and disgraceful are all these intrigues and squabbles in the midst of our life and death struggle.*

My own apprehension of failure might not have been so swiftly fanned away by those Ægean winds had I been able to know these things. As it was, even before Sir Ian's thin eager form was out of sight to starboard, the malaise of impending disaster had already vanished in the excitement of my own trivial reactions to this strange new life. Once again before I left Gallipoli I was to see him at the mercy of the Furies, and having seen him twice thus tormented I can understand how he has been able to suffer gadflies with such indifference.

General Gouraud, who had just taken General d'Amade's place on the Peninsula, was lunching with Sir Ian that day. I remember Eddie Keeling's saying to me in that exquisite Foreign Office voice of his, as the bearded hero passed along the gangway :

" I wonder why they call him the lion of the Ardennes, I should have said he was so much more like a bear."

I had not seen Eddie Keeling since he and I had acted together in *The Clouds* at Oxford. He had recently been a Secretary at the Residency in Cairo, but had contrived to

escape for a while from Diplomacy into a temporary lieutenancy, and he was now the cipher officer in I. Our sense of the ridiculous was almost identical, which was lucky, for we were destined to share a small tent when we all went ashore at the end of May, and if either of us had been inclined to laugh more or less than the other mutual assassination would have been inevitable under the conditions we were to experience. It was not easy to upset Eddie. With his wide lofty forehead and baby's mouth he was like a benign infant Jupiter, and his serene detachment from the petty humdrum of mortal existence was hardly less Olympian. 'These soldiers' among whom he found himself represented a more primitive society than any he had hitherto encountered; but his diplomatic training enabled him to deal with their taboos and totems without the least suggestion of superiority. He humoured their sense of their own importance as he would have humoured at the Foreign Office the dignity of a deputation of Fiji Islanders. He was formal and even ceremonious in his manner toward them; but throughout his brief military career, which he regarded as an experiment to wile away the tedium of a world at war, in the same spirit as grown-ups might sit down on the floor and play hunt-the-slipper to avoid being stared at by the critical guests of a children's party, they remained as much a source of amusement to him as he was a source of amusement and sometimes of perplexity to them.

Far different was the attitude of Captain George Lloyd.* To him they were, these soldiers, as much barbarians as they were to Eddie Keeling; but to Lloyd their primitiveness was not a matter even for one wry smile so much as an urgent call to the mission field. I began for the first time in my life to appreciate that Imperialism could touch a man's soul as deeply as Religion.

* Lord Lloyd of Dolobran, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., late High Commissioner for Egypt and the Sudan.

"Maps! Maps!" he would cry passionately, his dark eyes ablaze with fanaticism, his ivory cheeks flushed with the ardour of faith. "I always use large maps when I talk to my constituents."

"Yes, but you're not talking to your constituents here," I might answer.

And he would flash suspiciously at me those bright dark eyes of his, for he was sensitive, like the perfect Celt he was, to the faintest hint of ridicule. Then I might ask him how with his faith in the divine right of the British Empire he could excuse the stupidity of those in charge of its fortunes.

"Ah, but they're not necessary. We must get rid of them. They're in the way! They're in the way!"

"They always have been in the way," I would argue. "If I look back over the history of British Imperialism, it is a history of Saxon stupidity's always being helped out by Celtic imagination of the mess it has made. Why not break up the Empire and build it all over again from our point of view? It makes me sad to see people like you, and more important people than you out here, at the mercy of the muddling and jealousy of those who inherit an inferior racial tradition."

Lloyd would not listen to this kind of talk. The missionary spirit was too fervid in him to tolerate even a hint of profanity. I fancy it must have seized him first when he was cox of that great Cambridge crew of 1900. He would have tasted then the elation of controlling muscle with mind, and gradually he would have become convinced that given enough large maps he could conquer the world. I once pointed out what a pity it was he had not tried the effect of maps on the Committee of Imperial Defence as well as on his constituents in West Staffordshire.

"Who knows?" I said. "If you had, they might have found out where the Dardanelles were before the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* vanished so unaccountably from the

Mediterranean, and we might have had some good maps of our own for this part of the world instead of having to wait till we could capture one from the Turks."

Perhaps Lloyd did succeed in demonstrating to others beside his constituents the importance and excitement of large maps, for in 1917 Mark Sykes* took me into one of the rooms of the War Cabinet at Montagu House and showed me a huge map of Asia Minor after we had won the war, in which a large triangle of French Influence found its apex at Erzerum. It looked like another Ararat on which the Arc de Triomphe was to rest when the deluge of blood should begin to subside.

At the time I first met him, Lloyd was much concerned over the pigheadedness of his immediate chief, Colonel M. C. P. Ward, who would not pay as much attention as his Number Two thought he should to the reports that were continually coming in from Athens and elsewhere of contraband of copper entering Turkey through Bulgaria and of the re-fuelling of those German submarines which had just arrived in the Ægean. Colonel Ward's qualifications to be head of the Intelligence of an expedition to reduce Constantinople were not immediately obvious. He was a Gunner who had spent most of his military career as a specialist on home defence, and the only time he had ever been out of England before this was when he had been sent over to France to bring back the body of Lord Roberts. He was a methodical, lethargic, apparently slow-witted man well into middle-age, who suffered almost incessantly from hemorrhoids, which made him seem glum and unresponsive when he was really concentrating on a fight with physical pain. He was naturally inclined to scepticism and, lacking the impulse to sympathize with the difficulties of the hastily improvised espionage organization in Athens, he considered half the telegrams they sent through the Lega-

*The late Sir Mark Sykes, Bt.

tion a waste of time and money. Somehow among the odds and ends of my papers one of these telegrams from Athens has survived. It gives the name of a man at Tenedos who has information about the existence of land-mines near Krithia. Underneath is a note in Colonel Ward's handwriting :

*Captain Deedes*
*Ib*

*Please arrange for this man to be interviewed as to truth of this statement and obtain all evidence you can concerning these mines if they do exist.*

*M.C.P.W.*

The last four words are characteristic. At the time I daresay I thought Colonel Ward too ready to disbelieve everybody and everything ; but by the end of 1917 when I had interviewed some hundreds of men with information like this I should have been entirely on his side. I should have understood much better two years hence that when Eddie Keeling had just brought him two of those Athenian telegrams in which a pair of ' reliable agents ' flatly contradicted one another about the whereabouts of the Nth regiment of the Umpteenth Turkish Division and when in addition to that those whereabouts as deciphered differed irreconcilably from the names of any places on the maps provided for him by the War Office, it was not the moment to demand what he intended to do about this report of a submarine getting oil from a Greek collier off Dedeagatch. And this would so often be the kind of moment that George Lloyd would choose for approaching his chief.

Colonel Ward's point was that, if he handed what was probably worthless information to the Naval Adviser attached to G.H.Q., so that the Admiral could take any action he considered useful, he had done all he could.

George Lloyd's point was that the Navy was if possible even more incompetent than the Army and the Foreign Office and that it must be badgered into a definite statement of what action it did intend to take.

"That's not our business, Lloyd."

"I disagree with you, Colonel."

And then perhaps Lloyd would elaborate his point of view in a speech, partly because for several years he had been accustomed to believe that speeches played an important part in the political life of a nation and partly because the sight of Colonel Ward sitting hunched and sullen at his desk under the flow of his rhetoric always fanned the glowing embers of his missionary ardour to a fierce flame. I have often thought that on such occasions his own chief must have presented himself to Lloyd as a refractory native chief who was standing in the way of Imperial development.

"I wish you'd go away, Lloyd, and let me get on with what I'm doing," Colonel Ward would mutter sulkily.

"Then no action is to be taken?" Lloyd would rasp out, his voice acquiring a kind of harshness and a higher pitch, and even becoming slightly nasal in his indignation at such supine obstructiveness.

"I don't want to be taught my business by you."

At which Lloyd would shrug his shoulders, like the emotional Celt he was, and retire to his own desk, his eyes sometimes bright with what might almost have been unshed tears of chagrin, for to thwart Lloyd's driving efficiency was to pierce his very soul. Looking back on the Expedition after fourteen years I may wish that George Lloyd himself had been head of the Intelligence, but I wonder if he would have actually effected anything more with his energy and quick mind than Colonel Ward with his slow scepticism. What Mr. Winston Churchill, Sir Ian Hamilton, and Sir Roger Keyes failed to move could hardly have been moved by Lloyd at that date. He was just as much up against

that 'insurmountable mental barrier' as they were; but perhaps he was luckier than they, because he was directly face to face with the 'No' principle, and instead of breaking his heart against a wall of crystal he could lose his temper with the personification of it in a Gunner Colonel who regarded his knowledge of the East as the showy and superficial results of advantages in youth which poorer men had missed, and even his presence here at G.H.Q. as a mere piece of political jobbery.

So, with Colonel Ward standing like a heathen image between him and the practical results of his incessant energy, George Lloyd worked harder and harder. When I look back at the many long talks I had with him, apart from a few arguments about Imperialism as a political theory, I cannot recall a single frivolous or even irrelevant conversation. He was obsessed by his work, and yet for several weeks it used to look as if the only tangible result of his devoted labours would be the banishment of the Royal Army Pay Corps Major from the Intelligence room. Major Delacombe* was a dear old boy of illimitable good nature who, because there was nowhere else for him to sit in the *Arcadian*, had been pushed into a corner of the ship's gymnasium, there to deal with the financial affairs of the Staff. To Lloyd this presence of an outsider in the Intelligence was a perpetual outrage: a chorus girl in a Carthusian refectory would hardly have shocked St. Bruno more than the sight of Delacombe totting up figures behind the vaulting-horse in a corner of that disused gymnasium. When we all went ashore at the end of the month, Lloyd's first business, long before he bothered about his own comfort, about which indeed as a matter of fact he never did bother, being utterly ascetic, was to see Major Delacombe safely banished to the seclusion of a small office-tent of his own. I wrote a number of doggerel rhymes about the

*Lt.-Col. Addis Delacombe, D.S.O.

various members of G.H.Q. ; but the only one that remains in my memory is the verse I wrote about the Royal Army Pay Corps Major :

*Where is Major Delacombe?*
*He's no longer in this room.*
*In a windy tent he sits,*
*Issuing financial chits.*
*Lloyd sent Delacombe away*
*On the thirty-first of May.*

But gradually that 'insurmountable mental barrier' began to wear down even George Lloyd's resolution. He began to think that he was useless in the position he was filling, and like some ardent monk he began to long for greater rigours of self-mortification. He had already spent as much time as possible at Anzac in the first few weeks of the campaign, which meant death waiting for you round every corner all day and all night ; by the end of July he was wanting to rejoin his regiment—the Warwickshire Yeomanry—in order to share with them the dangers and hardships of Suvla. And let it be clear that he was not merely anxious to avoid the appearance of escaping from the miseries of that campaign ; he genuinely desired the squalid discomfort and peril of life on the Peninsula for a spiritual value he discerned in it. Yet he was personally, as I have insisted, the most fastidious and sensitive of men. I remember walking with him one dark night in late summer about the camp in Kephalo, Lloyd talking incessantly and somehow managing to avoid the tent-ropes, myself lantern in hand listening sympathetically, for there was indeed a most endearing simplicity and singleness of heart in him. Suddenly he screamed out in horror and began to tear down his slacks, until the lantern-light revealed one of those great centipedes like a clockwork train which was crawling

slowly over his thigh. He tore the loathsome insect from him with a shudder, and for a minute or two he was really gibbering with the remembrance of it.

Dear, delightful George Lloyd, if anyone could have converted me to Imperialism, it would have been you with your passionate sincerity and high purpose and infinite seriousness. No man whose career I have been privileged to study when only half carved has given me so much personal satisfaction in his ultimate achievement.

But in trying to do justice to George Lloyd it will not do to leave Colonel Ward in the reader's mind as a merely negative personality. He was far from being that, and for Eddie Keeling to be able usually to refer to him as 'Wardie' will perhaps indicate that in some of us he inspired a great deal of affection. There were moments, while he and Lloyd were arguing with one another, the Colonel in a khaki that resembled brown paper and Lloyd in a uniform the colour of *eau de nil*, when our sympathies were strongly with the Colonel, for sometimes we felt that Lloyd's speeches about efficiency were too much of a good thing in that sweltering tent full of flies and blown sand. Keeling and I enjoyed the Colonel's rich sense of the ridiculous, and perhaps it was the lack of this in Lloyd which really created the chasm between them. I have seen Colonel Ward so completely overcome by the laughter to which he was as incapable of giving full vent as to any other emotion that the tears would pour down his cheeks in rivulets, and he would seem on the verge of an apoplexy. An allusion to Lloyd's relentless pursuit of Major Delacombe from his nook behind the vaulting-horse to that small wind-swept sand-ridden tent all by itself at the top of the Kephalo Camp would lighten Colonel Ward's gloom in the contemplation of the most insoluble ubiquity of Turkish regiments and set him off gurgling and choking with mirth. No doubt some of his slowness was due to a lifelong association with heavy pieces of ordnance: you

may notice the same slowness among herdsmen. Lloyd's machine-gun manner affected the old Artillery man's dignity. And let me repeat that what Colonel Ward sometimes lost by first-hand knowledge of the Near East he often made up for by his patient disentanglement of fact from rumour. Moreover, his constitutional incredulity and hesitating response to the marvellous was on occasions a valuable drag, even on the gallant optimism of his Commander-in-Chief, whom, I fancy, he irritated only a little less acutely than he irritated George Lloyd though for quite different reasons. When the time comes to write of 1916 and 1917 I shall probably fail to be just to a type of mind like Colonel Ward's, because, at whatever distance of time they may be related, the bitterness of mistakes that need not have been made may return with as sharp a savour as of old. But of 1915 I am writing as the mere observer and from an angle completely unvexed by responsibility. To me Colonel Ward was always the most considerate of chiefs, and I owe him gratitude for too much kindness to be able to write without prejudice. Still, he certainly was obstinate. I did try once or twice to make him regard George Lloyd with more sympathy; but it was hopeless.

"His voice gets on my nerves, Mackenzie. I simply can't stand it." Thus the Colonel glowering at his desk and swotting a fly with his horsehair whisk.

"Yes, but after all, Colonel, he is your Number Two in Ia, and where would you find a more efficient one?"

"He's a damned politician, and I hate politicians. This isn't the place for Members of Parliament. He treats me as if I was a bloody idiot."

And then with that puckering of his face and slight thickening of an already thickish enunciation he would growl that if *I* had nothing to do *he* had, and that anyway he had heard enough quacking this morning to last him for some time.

"You go and talk to Captain George Lloyd, M.P. He likes talking better than I do."

But when George Lloyd was working he wanted to talk as little as the Colonel. One might as well have tried to interrupt a poet's frenzy. I shall never forget the expression of pale, immeasurable contempt on Lloyd's face when he found that Eddie Keeling and I had instituted cups of thick sweet Turkish coffee in the tent at eleven o'clock every morning: we might both have been sitting there with rubber-teats in our mouths. But my pen is running ahead too fast. These incidents of life in that hot, windy, fly-blown camp on the rolling links of Kephalo must wait awhile.

The first two or three days in the *Arcadian* were spent in getting to know people. This may sound an odd way to spend one's time on active service; but it must be remembered that I was not taken seriously as an officer. No job had as yet been found for me. I hoped to be able to imagine that I was being useful in due course. Meanwhile, if I could avoid being a positive nuisance I might count myself lucky. There was another in the *Arcadian* who was bemoaning the absence of a job, and this was 'Bob' Graves*. He was bemoaning even more bitterly the fact that he lacked a commission. Graves was a tall, slim, straight, hale and very athletic man of fifty-seven, a distinguished member of a distinguished family, who after being Consul-General in Crete and Salonica had been Adviser to the Ottoman Ministry of Finance and then Adviser and Inspector General to the Ottoman Ministry of the Interior. He had been fetched in a great hurry from Egypt, where he had been occupying some important position, in order to give advice about the way to manage Constantinople when it fell to our arms. Constantinople not having fallen and at the moment looking some way off falling, Graves was at a loose end. They could not very well send him back to Egypt from

*Sir Robert Windham Graves, K.C.M.G.

G.H.Q., because that would have been an admission of pessimism; but neither could they find any employment for him here that seemed worthy of his position. So there he was, walking round and round the *Arcadian* all day long in a khaki uniform without badges or stars or buttons and only the saxe-blue and crimson ribbon of St. Michael and St. George to lighten the drabness of its aspect, for in the circumstances he was debarred from sporting his Grand Cordon of the Medjidie. Naturally, as one would to a man of his seniority and service, I addressed him the first time as 'Mr. Graves'. And then he let fly. He did not wish to be known as 'Mr. Graves'. He hated at this moment to be loafing about here and doing nothing and being called 'Mr. Graves'. He wanted some kind of military rank and status, however humble, so that if no job could be found for him at G.H.Q. he could find a job for himself on the Peninsula. He objected to being treated as an old gentleman. They seemed to think that, because they could not make him a colonel or a general and give him the military equivalent of his position in real life, they were doing him a kindness by giving him no military rank at all.

As soon as I had sufficient status at G.H.Q., I spoke to several people about the unnecessary suffering they were causing poor Graves by cooping him up here in the *Arcadian* without making him even a second-lieutenant. I said I believed he would rather be a temporary lance-corporal than go on walking round and round the deck of the *Arcadian* at four miles an hour without a stripe or a star and always referred to as 'Mr. Graves'. People listened sympathetically, but they all agreed that nothing could be done about it and that Graves would have to go on as he was until Constantinople fell and he could become the Grand Vizier. It seemed to me an awful thing that a man who knew as much as anybody about the Near East should be eating his heart out in idleness, merely because the military

authorities were too shy to offer him any smaller job than the administration of Constantinople for which they had engaged his services. And then on top of his other thwarted ambitions Graves was seized with a longing to play squash rackets, and though he began to make a habit of walking round the *Arcadian* at five miles an hour, this did not allay his unsatisfied desire for a really violent game of ball. I am glad to remember that it was myself who, for purely selfish reasons, found a job for Graves in the end, and since about the same time he was made a Staff-Captain he soon had only the absence of a racquet-court to lament.

There were several good stories of Lord Kitchener told in the dining-saloon those first two or three days after my arrival, of which memory has preserved one fairly intact. It was told, I think, by Major Fuller, R.E.* a great K man, sharp-featured, intelligent, with a quick incisive voice, who being married to a Russian was convinced that the chief mess we had made of the war so far was our complete failure to appreciate what Russia was doing and still might do.

Once upon a time the civic dignitaries of some town wanted to make a presentation to Lord Kitchener as a mark of their regard for his genius. They were told that the best thing they could give him would be a piece of china. So a piece of china was bought, but being aware of the great man's expert knowledge of china the donors were anxious to know if the piece they proposed to give him was likely to meet with his approval. Without saying a word to him, it was put on the table at a civic lunch in the hope that his favourable opinion of it would reassure their anxiety about its acceptableness to a connoisseur. Now it really was a very fine and rare piece, and as soon as the great man sat down at table he cocked an appraising eye upon it. While the dignitaries were waiting for the verdict, Lord Kitchener,

* Maj.-Gen. C. G. Fuller, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., R.E.

who knew nothing about the presentation, had been deciding that he must somehow secure that piece for his own collection, and also that he must buy it cheap. So with this object in view he observed in his gruffest voice that the piece was not genuine, at which the poor dignitaries were so much depressed that they said not a word about the intended gift and took the china back to the dealers! I have just been re-reading Sir Ian Hamilton's *Gallipoli Diary*, and it is remarkable how often in Lord Kitchener's correspondence the spirit which led him to cheapen that piece of china betrays itself.

Though this chapter is already so much more full of people than of scenes and events, I must chronicle the appearance of one whom I had last met near midnight in the top digs of a house in King Edward Street, Oxford, when on opening the window to a loud tap Aubrey Herbert* came peering in, on his way back from Christ Church to Balliol by roofs, gutters, parapets, pipes, and window-sills. Everybody who knew Aubrey Herbert will understand how one's heart would leap to see him come peering up the side of the *Arcadian* on that blue May day in 1915. He had arrived from Anzac to ask Sir Ian's permission to arrange a truce to bury the dead. I had the chance of a long gossip with him as we walked round and round the deck in a series of rapid diagonals, for Aubrey was so short-sighted that he really could not see even well enough to walk straight. I think he was holding forth passionately about the woes of the Turks and the beauty of their characters, gripping my arm from time to time and exclaiming 'My dear, we *must* do this,' or 'My dear, we *must* do that.' As we zigzagged along I suddenly became aware that a shape was following our course, though what that shape was I did not dare for a moment to look round and ascertain, so acutely was I aware of a menace, an almost diabolical

*The late Lt.-Col. the Hon. Aubrey Herbert, M.P.

menace in its shadowing. At last I plucked up courage to turn my head. Imagine my dismay when I saw the Commander of the *Arcadian*, his cheeks an angry crimson, stalking along the deck after us with the air of one who is tracking a pair of assassins. The faintness of despair came over me. His eyes protruding like a Bateman admiral's were fixed upon a meandering line of ink-stains that stretched from one end of the deck to the other. I looked at Aubrey. Yes, there in the pocket of his service-jacket, or rather fixed to the outside of it, was a fountain-pen that was dripping with every step he took. I played a coward's part.

"Aubrey," I said, "I must run now. And, by the way, I think your pen's leaking or something."

I cannot remember what steps were taken to restore the Commander of the *Arcadian* to consciousness; but I do remember that those ink-spots were still traceable when we went ashore ten days later.

Two years afterwards on Easter Morning (old style) the *Arcadian* was torpedoed off the Island of Sikinos* in full sight of horrified people walking on the cliffs after Mass to greet one another with the joyful salutation Χριστὸς ἀνέστη —Christ is Risen. My representative in Sikinos telegraphed to me in Syra that she sank in two minutes and that many lives had been lost. The *Arcadian* lies fathoms down in the blue Ægean with those ink-stains on her deck, and now he whose pen made them has gone too.

Sir Ian Hamilton said that before any job could be found for me in the Intelligence at G.H.Q. my position would have to be regularized by formally requesting the loan of my services from the General commanding the Royal Naval Division. This must be done in writing through the Adjutant-General and I could take over the letter myself to Divisional Headquarters, which would give me an oppor-

*I feel nearly positive that it was Sikinos, but it may have been Siphnos.

tunity to see something of conditions on the Peninsula. So Colonel Beynon wrote out:

*To G.O.C.*

*R.N.D.*

*The services of Lieut. E. M. C. Mackenzie, R.M., H.M.S. Victory, can be usefully employed in G.H.Q. (I) if you have no need for them.*

It struck me, while Colonel Beynon* was making this statement in black and white, that General Woodward† the A.G. seemed to think all this excess of courtesy a waste of his A.A.G.'s time. Some days after this I was told that he had not yet received any recognition of the part he had played in the despatch of the Expeditionary Force to France in August, 1914, for the success of which he had been chiefly responsible. Moreover, I have gathered since that Sir Ian Hamilton had found in him one of those 'insurmountable mental barriers' on several occasions out here. So perhaps the wintry glance with which he seemed to freeze that testimonial to my utility was less personal than I supposed. I can see him now, a lonely, somewhat shrivelled little man to my fancy, nearly always taking his exercise by himself up and down between the rows of tents at Kephalo. So many individual judgments at variance out there, so many separate prisons of the mind and small islands of thwarted hopes! But what was I imagining of them with the excitement of going to Helles in a trawler to-morrow? And how much would I have bothered about them if I had, deliciously swirling as I was in the miniature whirlpool of my own adventures? My position was going to be 'regularized' as the jargon put it. This time I should not be straying about in the confusion of that beach like a nervous child, and hanging on to the impeccable Kenny's slightly, but only very slightly, impatient hand.

*Brig.-Gen. H. L. Beynon, C.M.G.

†Maj.-Gen. Sir Edward Woodward, K.C.M.G., C.B.

## CHAPTER VI

### HELLES

THE harbour of Kephalo was in fact little better than an open roadstead, and sheltered only from the south and west. It was a safer anchorage than any water round Tenedos, being as conveniently placed for Helles, from which it was twelve miles away, as for Anzac, from which it was fifteen; but that was the most that could be said in its favour. Virgil's line about Tenedos in the Second Æneid *nunc tantum sinus et statio male fida carinis*, 'a mere bay and a treacherous berth for ships,' applied equally well to Kephalo in Imbros. It was on Saturday, the twenty-second of May, that I set out from here in a trawler for Helles in order to get my position at G.H.Q. 'regularized.'

The long line of the tawny Peninsula cliffs on our port side looked so harmless that morning. It seemed impossible to fancy that the vessel could not swing lazily in toward them over that limpid blue water and land us in some jolly cove where we might bathe and picnic at our leisure and afterwards explore those green summits and verdurous chines. The voyage between Imbros and Helles would too soon become as hackneyed and monotonous as the road to the railway-station; but that morning the beauty of it was all a dream and a surprise. The island mountain of Samothrace came into view, towering beyond Imbros six thousand feet into an azure serenity. I remembered how Poseidon once sat upon its wooded peak to watch by Troy the Battle of the Ships, and how he had stabled his horses

in a cavern of the sea between Imbros and Tenedos when he descended to the Greek camp in the form of Calchas the Herald and roused the Greater and the Lesser Ajax to resist with new valour the onslaught of Hector. Gradually, as the trawler held on her calm course, Imbros assumed its long wave line and the cone of Mount Elias on Tenedos stood out sharply from the southern horizon. Now Ida and the mountains beyond the Asiatic shore came more clearly into view, and I thought of Hera winging her way with Sleep, the twin-brother of Death, from Lemnos and Imbros over this same sea to many-fountained Ida that there she might lull Zeus by excess of love to sleep, and thus allow his brother, the Earth-Shaker, to harass the Trojans harder and still harder until even his favourite Hector fell, smitten on the neck by that mighty stone which Telamonian Ajax hurled, so that he lay gasping and vomiting blood. . . .

"You write, don't you?" a bland voice broke in, dispelling these Homeric evocations.

I looked up to see a tall thin elderly man with a grey moustache, and the black velvet tabs of a General in the Indian Medical Service. This was Surgeon-General W. E. Birrell, the Director of Medical Services at G.H.Q. I fancied for a moment that he was going to feel my pulse when I admitted that I did, so much concern was written on his countenance.

"But tell me," he went on. "Do you really make a living by it?"

"Yes."

"By writing novels, I mean?"

"Yes, yes."

"Extraordinary!" he ejaculated in bewilderment. "But do you seriously mean to tell me that people buy enough of your books to support you?"

"So far, they have, General."

"Well, it's the most extraordinary thing I ever heard.

I couldn't believe it when somebody told me about you on the *Arcadian*. I never had the least idea that people ever dreamed of buying books to that extent. Why, I never bought a book in my life! Ah, yes . . . I may have bought a magazine occasionally. . . . You know, at some railway-station perhaps on my way to Ireland to go fishing. But never a book. It's most interesting to learn that you can sell enough books to live on. Most interesting and most extraordinary! I would never have believed it if you hadn't told me so yourself. How do you think of a book? Do you just sit down and think. . . . I don't want to seem inquisitive, but I've never come into contact with this kind of thing before."

My attempt to explain the process of writing a book failed to interest General Birrell as much as he fancied it might, for he soon turned away, and presently he was wagging his head gravely at the other end of the trawler over this queer business of earning a living out of books.

The letter to General Paris* had been addressed to G.O.C. R.N.D., Lancashire Landing; but when I inquired on the beach for the Headquarters of the Naval Division most people seemed to doubt the existence of such a corps, and as for General Paris, I might have been asking the way to the address of somebody residing in the moon. However, after wandering about like a schoolboy who has gone to the wrong terminus on an August Bank Holiday I managed at last to get directed to my destination, and leaving behind me the noise and confusion of that dusty amphitheatre by the sea, I found myself on a road that led toward a grey-green expanse of flat empty country, in which the only sound was the singing of the larks overhead and the faint music of the telephone-wires that glittered here and there in the sunlight like strands of gossamer. Presently I reached a Field Ambulance Station by the edge of a gulley running

*Maj.-Gen. Sir Archibald Paris, K.C.B., R.M.A.

westward. These clustered white tents with their Red Cross flags fluttering looked fresh and neat and cheerful. Here I inquired again for the Headquarters of the R.N.D., and was told to keep on in the direction of what looked like factory chimneys emerging from groves of trees on the easterly side of the Peninsula, but which were actually the remains of a Roman aqueduct. The road came to an end somewhere at this point, and I walked on for a while over stunted scrub until I noticed on the ground a lark's nest with four or five eggs in it, which seemed to make me suddenly aware of my own loneliness. I stopped to look round for the sight of another human being; but some trick of the level here evoked an illusion that I was the only creature left to wander about this tongue of land, and that the ships upon that sheen of silver water beyond were dreaming there at rest for ever in unimaginable remoteness. The aspect of Achi Baba from here gave it a much more gradual elevation, and the lustrous live scarlet of all those poppies had within a week dulled into the dingy brownish-crimson of an old bloodstain.

At this moment the empty air suddenly became full of whispers. I walked on, wondering what they were. The whispers turned to attenuated Æolian whinnyings, a haunting half-melodious sound rising and falling. I stopped again and listened anxiously. The question I had to ask set my heart thudding. Was this. . . . Could this actually be the noise of shells? Or was it not the singing of the light May breeze along the telephone-wires? Was it that which made these will-o'-the-wisp sighs? No, it was never the light May breeze, and therefore it could only be the noise of shells. Yes, but whose shells? I should look such a duffer if I were to start running or even walking faster than usual to avoid shells intended to burst four miles away on Achi Baba. I tried to determine from which direction the whinnying came; but it was circumambient, ubiquitous, inestimable. The most encouraging part about it was that nowhere could

I perceive the least material disturbance of the landscape. The larks went on singing away overhead : the telephone-wires now running along near the ground hummed as peacefully as a kettle on the hob. And then, as if to add a final touch to the atmosphere of tranquillity and leisure all around, a tortoise came crawling clumsily through the dwarf scrub at my feet. I told myself that, if this tortoise had been crawling about here for the last month at that pace without suffering any harm, it would be deliberate cowardice on my part to start running, however much I might feel inclined to do so. I also reminded myself that, if destiny intended me to be killed at Gallipoli, it would mean that I had done the work required of me in this world and that for me to desire to prolong my stay here a moment after that consummation would be ignoble. I decided then that nothing would ever shake my conviction that no human being's existence depended upon blind chance. And nothing since ever has shaken it.

Meanwhile, my immediate business was to reach Divisional Headquarters and feeling curiously invulnerable (for the self-confidence or vanity of the artist had by now decided he had not outlived his capacity for valuable work) I walked on at the same pace I had used since I first started to ascend from the confused and noisy beach and found myself in this sage-green solitude. The shells continued to whinny past. Now and then one that was presumably travelling nearer to myself seemed positively to neigh, while others much farther off seemed to . . . seemed to make what kind of a sound, I asked myself . . . well, really, almost to give the same kind of sibilant chirrup that goldfinches utter in their dipping flight toward some distant paradise of thistledown. I had paused to achieve this comparison, and in the very instant of its achievement the hell of a bang went off quite close and made me jump a yard into the air.

After this I ran for about a hundred yards and, in spite of my philosophical reflections on destiny, might have continued running all the rest of the way to Divisional Headquarters, had I not sighted a long double line of mules, with men in shirt-sleeves moving about their business. Like a figure in a dream I recognized the Army Service Corps Colonel who had been senior officer on board the *Franconia* coming from Alexandria. He was wearing the same shade of *eau de nil* khaki as George Lloyd's, and had stopped to stare over his shoulder at myself. I waved to him rather excitably with a vague hope he might attribute that hundred yard sprint of mine to the intense pleasure the sight of his face had given me. However, while he was still trying to make out who I was, there was another bang, at which all the mules started to fling their hind legs in the air and the Colonel himself to run. I only did not run in the same direction as he did because I thought I would rather be hit by a shell than by the hoof of a mule. After another quarter of a mile of walking in a style that would certainly have disqualified me in a walking race I reached the outskirts of a small olive-grove, and seeing a man in shirt-sleeves strolling along with two buckets, as if he were on his way to feed some pigs round the corner, I called out and asked him where exactly Divisional Headquarters were. For answer he sat down abruptly in a bush. I thought he had tripped over something till I came up to him and found he had been hit in the forearm by a shrapnel bullet.

"These Turks are proper blighters, sir," he observed, clicking his tongue reproachfully at the wound.

I was ignorant of the etiquette for such an occasion, and the good chap seemed to realize my embarrassment, for he advised me to hurry on and get under cover. General Paris's dug-out was only a few yards beyond the trees, and as for himself the doctor was handy.

"But this don't mean Alex," he said with a rueful shake

of the head. "Or I don't think so," he added, yet with a note of optimism in his voice as the blood gushed encouragingly.

A minute or two later I was saluting in the entrance of General Paris's dug-out.

"You'd better come inside," said a burly, florid man with a white moustache, who was sitting at a camp-table some two yards into the earth. "A fellow was hit in the foot yesterday just where you're standing now."

I never had the fortune to serve directly under General Paris, nor even to see much more of him than I saw for perhaps ten minutes that May morning; but from that brief acquaintance he left on my mind a clear-cut impression of sensitiveness, high courage, prudence, and great human sympathy. He took the piece of paper on which so polite an application had been made for my services, and wrote: *Certainly. There is no work for another Intelligence Officer with the Division.* Then he scratched out G.O.C. R.N.D. on the envelope, substituted A.A.G. G.H.Q., put the piece of paper inside, and handed it back to me. It all reminded me very much of the Dodo's solemn presentation to Alice of her own thimble as a prize for the Caucus-race which everybody won. I could not feel that my visit here for the loan of my services had any more importance in actuality than the winning of that race nor that the buff envelope, which almost as soon as I had taken it from my pocket was handed back to me, had any more significance than the thimble.

After this visit to the General I interviewed the Paymaster about my pay and field-service allowance. He made what seemed to me the sensible suggestion that I should get my money from Major Delacombe at G.H.Q., who would be able to recover it from him. Little did I think, when I lightly assented to this plan, that over two years would elapse and a pile of correspondence nearly two feet high rear itself on my desk before I got that pay or those allow-

ances owing to the fact that no system had ever been discovered or could ever be contrived by which an Army Paymaster like Major Delacombe might be authorized to hand over money to an officer on the books of the Royal Navy. Thus the only means by which I could get my money was by taking a trawler to Helles and walking over to the Headquarters of my Division. This always meant getting heavily shelled, and finally, having decided that life was worth more than thirteen shillings and sixpence a day, I gave up trying to draw my pay or allowances at Gallipoli and built the ground-floor of that tower of correspondence.

The Paymaster at D.H.Q. hospitably invited me to stop and have lunch with the Divisional Staff, and seeing a table laid with metal plates on each of which was a rissole like a small cannon-ball, I had no hesitation in accepting. It looked so jolly in the dappled shade of the trees, that long wooden table set about three feet below the level of the ground in a narrow shed open along one side and roofed with corrugated iron under a thatch of brushwood, such a real Arcadia, compared with the G.H.Q. ship. I cannot remember whom of the R.N.D. Staff I met, because at the moment I was being introduced to them a most damnable racket began, which lasted for five minutes, and I gathered that this devil's dinner-gong was being sounded by the enemy. In the middle of it one of the Marine Interpreters I had met in the trawler going to Tenedos last Monday came hurtling round the corner and exclaiming, as he leapt down into the Mess, that the last one had damn nearly got him. I saw no valid reason why the next one should not damn nearly get him also, or me either, or any of us if it came to that. But as it was evidently the use to pretend that we were quite safe in this rustic hen-house I toyed with my rissole, which not only looked like a cannon-ball, but tasted like one too, owing to my dislike of high explosive as an

*apéritif* and the drought in my mouth. I think we were all glad when the noise stopped, for while we went on wondering when Italy would really come in (though personally I was wondering much more anxiously when one of those confounded shells would really come in) there was in our behaviour a hint of the forced cheerfulness with which a picnic party watches a heavy thunderstorm from an inadequate shelter; nor could we even pretend that this particular storm would freshen up the herbaceous border.

After lunch I was directed back to the beach by a quicker and a quieter road than the one I came by. There was only one shrapnel-burst on my way along, but that was near enough for some of the bullets to kick the dust up round my feet. Nothing else unpleasant happened till I passed the body of a mule, on which a small whizz-bang must have registered a direct hit, for it looked like a heap of pink toy balloons.

I was sustained during this walk back by the hope of obtaining some Royal Marine buttons and badges at the R.N.D. Ordnance Stores, but though there were neither buttons nor badges, I found in charge, Bernard Wallis, an Oxford contemporary of mine, which more than made up for the disappointment. Of all the dug-outs I was to enter on the Peninsula none ever surpassed his for absolute dreariness. There were dug-outs built in the side of the cliff just above the pier at Lancashire Landing, such a row for instance as the one known as Sea View Terrace, which would have delighted children by what Americans call 'cunningness.' There were dug-outs at Anzac which by reason of their owners' having had to dig deeper and yet deeper to dodge the incessant shells which came ferreting through their burrows had achieved enough romantic mystery to be an imaginable abode for trolls or gnomes. But the dug-out of Bernard Wallis was repulsive in its dank symmetry. An oblong about nine feet in length, three

feet wide, and three feet deep, had been excavated in some fairly level ground between the aerodrome and W beach. The last three feet had then been covered over with planks and soil and prolonged round the corner at right angles for another six feet to give a shelter for the occupant's bed from everything except such fragments of shell as chose to attack his ankles by entering along the open ditch in front. Yet the dismal geometry was not the worst part of this dug-out. Dust-tormented though they were the refuges nearer the beach had a sun-tanned healthy look; but the soil here was a kind of greyish clay exuding a cadaverous moisture like sweat on the forehead of a sea-sick man. Fat flies seemed to find the sides of this dug-out refreshing, for they would return again and again to bask on them in the slanting rays of the sun. The real plague of flies had hardly begun yet; but there were enough of them here already, because mules were picketed close by. Bernard Wallis himself was looking jaded, as his preoccupation with stores in this squalid grave amid dust and flies and rattling wheels and gunfire was enough to make a man who had left Balliol to enter the Board of Education. No doubt we talked of old friends. I daresay he gave me tea; but I do not remember that. I only remember a piece of crumpled silver paper lying in the corner, which somehow added the final touch of squalor to that wretched ditch. Just before I left to walk down to the beach and board the trawler for Imbros, I was standing by the edge of that slug-coloured grave, chatting to a trim-bearded Chief Petty Officer when he suddenly gripped my arm and dragged me down into it, yelling: 'Look out, here comes a Black Maria!' We all three flung ourselves on our faces; but there was no explosion. It had been the whinnying of a mule which had made the Chief Petty Officer anticipate a big shell. This was satisfactory, because it proved that my comparison on the way to Divisional Headquarters had been a good one.

I often noticed after that the way men would jump and listen over their shoulders when suddenly a horse whinnied somewhere in the neighbourhood. Yet I often found the accuracy of the comparison doubted. That's the trouble with English nowadays. The language has caked into phrases, and the shape of the individual word grows daily less distinguishable. Shells whine for nineteen listeners out of twenty; but, though I have listened to nearly every kind of shell, I have never heard one of the brutes utter a genuine whine. The most terrifying noise was that of big bombs being dropped from a Taube over the aerodrome. This was an appallingly exultant ooooh-ah-ooooh-ah—oooh-ah—oooh-ah—oooh-ah—ooh-ah—ooh-ah—ooh-ah—ooh-ah quicker and quicker until the blinding bang at the end left the heart twitching and gasping like a flatfish on the floor of a boat. Frightening too were the steel arrows which were sometimes used by the enemy at that date and which sounded like the prolonged infinitely attenuated scream of a swooping hawk.

I wrote a few pages back about the ships at rest upon a sheen of silver water. They were not to rest there much longer. The fatal periscope had been sighted that very afternoon. A signal was made to quit the anchorage off Helles and fly to Mudros fifty miles away. Before I embarked on the Kephalo trawler I saw them in full flight, transports and battleships, the *Agamemnon* seeming to lead the van. The air was heavy that evening and, what wind there was being in the south, the smoke of every ship was driven down astern, which gave the effect of a number of dogs running away with their tails between their legs. The sense of abandonment was acute. There was a sudden lull in the noise of the beach, as if every man had paused to stare at the unfamiliar emptiness of the water and then turned to his neighbour with a question in his eyes about their future here. It is certain that the Royal Navy never

executed a more demoralizing manœuvre in the whole of its history.

The morning after this being Whitsunday, I asked leave to go to Helles again on the chance of getting a Mass in the French lines. This pious hope was frustrated by the lateness of the trawler in reaching the Peninsula. I think I must have been with one of the G.H.Q. liaison officers with French Headquarters, for I was invited to lunch with General Gouraud and his Staff in the big fort at Sedd-el-Bahr. I wandered about by myself on V beach for the rest of the morning, looked with awe at the rusted bulk of the *River Clyde*, and knelt for a few moments by those two long graves, at the head of which a painted board commemorated: *Gallant dead of the Dublins and Munsters and others.* Reading *Lyra Graeca* the other day with the help of Mr. Edmonds's translation I came across a wonderful elegiac couplet from Simonides, which written nearly two thousand five hundred years ago might have served for all who fell at Gallipoli:

. . . ἀμφί τε Βυζάντειαν ὅσοι θάνον ἰχθυέσσαν
ῥυόμενοι πορέαν, ἄνδρες ἀρηϊθόοι.

*. . . and those who died before Byzantium, to save the fishy straits of the sea, men swift in the work of war.*

On the sandy slope up from the beach were some burrows of a French Colonial regiment. The faces of these men in their light blue uniforms with golden anchors for a badge horrified me in some way. I cannot explain why. They seemed to have no business to be cooking their mid-day meal with such red greedy faces and with such an obviously sensual enjoyment of their squalor. They seemed to have no business to be alive at all. Again I ponder over that scene which is still so vivid and I ask myself if the disgust I felt was that which makes one turn from a bedraggled cat. The cat is not meant to be bedraggled; it requires luxury

to maintain its personality. So too with the Frenchman. From the moment he is degraded below the level of his sleek normal existence he becomes much more completely brutalized than any other national. Those light-blue animals with human eyes, scratching themselves and wolfing their food in the entrances of their sandy burrows, remain most horribly in my fancy, they and the stale smell of death above them in the crystalline air.

It was a relief to search for and find the grave of Doughty-Wylie higher up. Had a telegram from Sir Ian Hamilton which was sent on the eleventh of April reached me, I should have met that hero. He had stood here, waving the Dublins and Munsters on with a cane until he was killed. They had followed him, and the village of Sedd-el-Bahr fell.

That medieval village was a picturesque place, and though the cypresses round the mosque had been shorn and pollarded by the guns of the *Queen Elizabeth*, there were still many fruit-trees untouched, figs and pomegranates in high-walled Turkish gardens which cast their shade over narrow entries and winding secluded ways. General Gouraud and his Staff were lodged in the castellated fort, and the bearded General himself presided like a patriarch seated at the big circular mess table in that shadowy dome, which was bricked, as I seem to remember, like a Byzantine apse. Further round was General Bailloud, the liveliest old man on the Peninsula, a bald-headed veteran of seventy who commanded one of the French Divisions and who, with his antics and his jokes, with his apple-cheeks and shining Roman nose, his many medals and bright uniform, suggested the presence there of a Punchinello in a light-blue satin doublet hung with jingling bells. The news of Italy's entry into the war was drunk in red wine. *Vive l'Italie!* It was the first and last time I heard that salutation from the lips of Frenchmen throughout the war. This was France at France's most magical

best, this gaiety and ceremoniousness and wit and deep-throated bubbling conversation. There were no windows in the dome; the light entered through the door—a single azurous and dazzling aperture for the whole of that great shadowy interior.

Soon after the coffee and cognac a shell from a big gun on the Asiatic shore struck V beach, and those of us who had to get back to Lancashire Landing were advised to start on our way before they began to shell the road. So off we set with only one pause to look back from the top of the rise and receive a benevolent wave from the General standing in the entrance of his patriarchal hall. Then we dipped down the soft dusty road out of sight of Sedd-el-Bahr. Another shell crashed on the beach behind us on the left, and we hurried a little faster. But the enemy was in a quiet lazy mood. Nothing else disturbed our walk back to Lancashire Landing. It was very hot; too hot really to shoot much. Even the French 75's only had one spasm of violent barking, and they were ready to bark at a mouse if the Forward Observation Officer told them to. But this afternoon it was so hot that he had probably laid his glasses down on the sill of the Observation Post to sit back for an hour and let his spirit wander along the shady side of his favourite boulevard, or beneath the chestnut blossom in the Bois de Boulogne.

On Whit Monday in the company of several officers from G.H.Q. I went over to Anzac, where there was a truce of eight hours for the Turks to bury their dead. It has never been perfectly clear who really did ask for this truce. Liman Von Sanders says we did; Sir Ian Hamilton says they did. My own opinion is that Aubrey Herbert alone was responsible for it. A ludicrous incident occurred when the preliminaries were being discussed by various officers of high rank on both sides. They were gathered in a tent on the beach at Anzac, those Brass-hats and Beys, all of them

probably feeling a little more anxious than usual to uphold the dignity of their respective nations, when suddenly the flap was lifted at the back and a New Zealand or Australian batman put his head through to call out in a voice of indignant contempt:

"Heh! Have any of you muckers pinched my kettle?"

There was heavy rain that morning for most of the fifteen miles to Anzac; but it cleared away before we went ashore from the torpedo-boat and it left behind a hotter, damper, more airless day than I could match in all my experience of the Italian *scirocco*. As we turned the corner of that famous narrow beach running along the base of the steep tawny cliffs and started to walk up the Valley of Death, a stretcher came rapidly past, on which I was horrified to recognize, with head thrown back and mouth agape stertorously breathing, the prostrate body of my old friend Harry Pirie-Gordon, with whom I had shared rooms at 43 High Street, Oxford in 1903-4. He was not desperately wounded, I was relieved to find, but suffering from acute ptomaine poisoning and was being hurried away as quickly as possible to a hospital ship. It was a tremendous shock to meet like this a man whom I had known intimately since we were seventeen, but of whose presence out here I was completely unaware until I saw his body sweep past me in the swirl of that crowded narrow beach. Bits of scenes from our past together kept intruding even upon that most fantastic scene of the actual moment. . . . Pirie-Gordon riding back in Moorish dress from Tetuan to Tangier . . . being attacked by dogs as we rode through a village at dusk and Pirie-Gordon's mount shying into a hedge of prickly-pears and his Moorish costume getting ripped open. . . . Pirie-Gordon's face when he was told in the hotel at Tangier that our porter had fallen into a river with all his European clothes, so that for some hours he was faced by the prospect of having to cross to Spain in

a costume split open from the waist downward like the dress of a *merveilleuse* . . . myself lying prostrate with sea-sickness in the gaudy packet to Algeciras . . . being hurried by the police out of Barcelona where the barricades were up in the streets and left stranded on a cold January midnight in Toulouse . . . running out of money . . . intense hunger on the journey home because we could not afford to buy ourselves anything to eat after Barcelona . . . snatching in desperation at two sweets with soft chocolate insides which a fellow passenger had left in his dinner-basket when he got out of the train to buy himself a paper at Limoges . . . we were eighteen years old then . . . and now at thirty-two this incredible place!

It had been hot enough down by the water's edge; but the farther we penetrated up the Valley of Death the hotter it became. The sun had broken through the silver mist above, and the wet verdure from the arbutus bushes all the way along the gradually narrowing ravine was exhaled in steam. Almost to the very top the steep slopes were riddled with dug-outs, some as apparently inaccessible as sand-martins' holes in the face of a quarry. Outside a dug-out beside the path a couple of tall Australians were sitting with nothing on but shorts. One of them was holding up the pannikin that held his restricted allowance of water.

"Now, if I was a mucking canary," he was murmuring pensively, "I might have a bath in this."

Much has been written about the splendid appearance of those Australian troops; but a splendid appearance seems to introduce somehow an atmosphere of the parade-ground. Such litheness and powerful grace did not want the parade ground; that was to take it from the jungle to the circus. Their beauty, for it really was heroic, should have been celebrated in hexameters not headlines. As a child I used to pore for hours over those illustrations of Flaxman for Homer and Virgil which simulated the effect of ancient

pottery. There was not one of those glorious young men I saw that day who might not himself have been Ajax or Diomed, Hector or Achilles. Their almost complete nudity, their tallness and majestic simplicity of line, their rose-brown flesh burnt by the sun and purged of all grossness by the ordeal through which they were passing, all these united to create something as near to absolute beauty as I shall hope ever to see in this world. The dark glossy green of the arbutus leaves made an incomparable background for these shapes of heroes, and the very soil here had taken on the same tawny rose as that living flesh; one might have fancied that the dead had stained it to this rich warmth of apricot.

On and on we walked. Major Jack Churchill was setting a cracker of a pace. He was a beefy man, and by now his round cheeks were as wet and crimson as the cistus flowers in the scrub. I caught sight of a bush with deep orange-buff blossoms among the undergrowth on the left, and after scrambling up to identify it found a phlomis or Jerusalem sage I had never seen before. When I came back to the sticky path between the now fast closing sides of the ravine I overtook Pollen*, Sir Ian Hamilton's Military Secretary, talking to three Australians, not one of whom was less than six feet four inches tall. Pollen, who had a soft, somewhat ecclesiastical voice, was saying:

"Have you chaps heard that they've given General Bridges† a posthumous K.C.M.G.?"

"Have they?" one of the giants replied. "Well, that won't do him much good where he is now, will it, mate?"

Poor Pollen, who was longing to be sympathetic and not to mind the way these Australians would stare at his red tabs without saluting, walked on a little depressed by the reception of his effort at making conversation, perhaps on

*Lt.-Col. S. H. Pollen, C.M.G.
†The late Maj.-Gen. Sir W. T. Bridges, Commander 1st Australian Division.

the very spot where General Bridges had been mortally wounded. He looked carefully at the ground when he met the next lot, whereupon they all gave him an elaborate salute, and then because he had looked up too late to acknowledge it one of them turned to the others and said :

" I suppose that's what they call breeding ? "

They really were rather difficult ; and so, no doubt, was Achilles.

At last dripping with sweat—I merely emphasize our discomfort in walking up this valley during a truce to suggest what it was like for the men who had to walk backward and forward here every day under fire from three directions—dripping with sweat, we reached an almost perpendicular cliff, up which it was difficult enough to scramble by that narrow zigzag of sticky mud with only a cane and a burberry. What it must have been for men in full equipment to storm the face of that cliff at the bayonet's point . . . or for wounded men and stretcher-bearers to descend. . . .

Somebody turned round to offer me a cigar.

" You'd better light up this."

And, as I paused for a moment in perplexity to wonder why I should exhaust by smoking what wind I had left, the smell of death floated over the ridge above and settled down upon us, tangible, it seemed, and clammy as the membrane of a bat's wing.

Immediately along the top of the ridge were the trenches of Quinn's Post with the Turkish trenches hardly twenty yards beyond. I clambered up on the parapet and stood there staring at the forbidden land which rolled away in grey-green bosky undulations as far as the eye could reach, and I remember thinking how much it reminded me of some serene estate over which brooded that immemorial hush of the game-preserve. In the foreground was a narrow stretch of level scrub along which flags were stuck at intervals and

a line of sentries, Australians and Turks, faced one another. Staff officers of both sides were standing around in little groups, and there was an atmosphere about the scene of local magnates at the annual sports making suggestions about the start of the obstacle race. Aubrey Herbert looked so like the indispensable bachelor that every country neighbourhood retains to take complete control of the proceedings on such occasions. Here he was, shuffling about, loose-gaited, his neck out-thrust and swinging from side to side as he went peering up into people's faces to see whether they were the enemy or not, so that, if they were, he could offer them cigarettes and exchange a few courtesies with them in their own language . . . and everywhere Turks digging and digging graves for some four thousand of their countrymen who had been putrefying in heaps along this narrow front for nearly a month of warm May air.

"I must trouble you to get off my parapet, Major. It's rather delicate," said one of the men in the front trench to Orlo Williams, who had been surveying the scene through his glasses and by doing so nearly created an incident.

"And you've got your foot in an awkward place," he called up to me. Looking down I saw squelching up from the ground on either side of my boot like a rotten mangold the deliquescent green and black flesh of a Turk's head.

"This parapet's pretty well made up of dead bodies," said our friend below, putting out his hand to help me jump back into the trench, for he saw that I had had enough of it up there.

The impression which that scene from the ridge by Quinn's Post made on my mind has obliterated all the rest of the time at Anzac. I cannot recall a single incident on the way back down the valley. I only know that nothing could cleanse the smell of death from the nostrils for a fortnight afterwards. There was no herb so aromatic but it reeked of carrion, not thyme nor lavender, nor even rosemary.

## CHAPTER VII

### LIFE AT G.H.Q.

COLONEL WARD was doubtful of being able to invent any work for me when I presented myself in the ship's gymnasium to serve my country. The only hope he offered was that Deedes, on his return from Helles, might find something for me to do. Deedes was the head of Ib, and as such overlord of all the interpreters, responsible for the organization of contre-espionage, and the chief intermediary with the agents of espionage. Employment under him sounded an attractive occupation; but nobody knew when he was likely to be back from the Peninsula, and I did not want to spend my time walking round the deck of the *Arcadian* with Graves, lamenting our enforced idleness. Then Eddie Keeling suggested I might take down the telegrams for him as he deciphered them. This was too much for George Lloyd, to whom the amount of leisure Keeling already had in which to tilt back in a chair and read novels seemed disgraceful.

"Yes," said Lloyd, grimly, "I knew they'd push you into this room. All the odds and ends get pushed in here."

I was aware that this remark was not intended so much for myself as for dear old Major Delacombe away there in the corner behind the vaulting-horse, because when Lloyd spoke he lanced in the direction of the Paymaster what is called in a society far removed from the one in which I now found myself a 'perishing' look. But Major Delacombe paid no attention to Lloyd's ungraciousness. He just sat

totting up his figures, as quiet and unobtrusive as a well-behaved bobtail sheepdog.

"However," Lloyd continued, "if you really want to try to make yourself useful you can take on the Intelligence Summary. I've not had time to keep it up to date since the beginning of the month."

For the benefit of those as ignorant as I was when Lloyd put down on the desk in front of me a volume like a large diary I must explain that an Intelligence Summary is an abstract of all the information about the enemy which reaches the Intelligence of the General Staff during a campaign. This is supposed to be entered up every day, and the result is sent back at the end of the campaign to go into the archives of the War Office for the benefit of the Official Historian who will one day write the Official History of that campaign. There were various sources from which this information was bottled for drinking again in peace, among others the reports of Divisional Intelligence Officers sent in to G.H.Q. after such an examination of prisoners as I had watched Major Fiennes conduct on the trawler going to Tenedos. The main source, however, was provided by a number of telegrams which, though apparently emanating from a mysterious initial in Athens I will call V, were signed with the name of the British Minister, Sir Francis Elliot. I was too shy to ask who or what V was, which was lucky, because the portrait of him fancy painted helped by its romantic implications to make my task seem a little less dull than it most undoubtedly was.

*Athens*
*May* 5, 1915

*Following from V*

*Agent Number* 444 *reports:*

*The Umpteenth Division Redif is being moved to Panderma.*

*The Turks are suffering from the scarcity of coffee and indignation against the Germans increases daily.*

*I hear from a fairly reliable source that several large (group undecipherable) have been placed in the windows of the Ministry of (group undecipherable) to guard against the attacks of the allied submarines which have created consternation in Constantinople.*

*Elliot.*

This is the kind of telegram that used to come in from Athens at the rate of ten or so a day. For obvious reasons I have merely given the parody of an original. Many of them were two or three pages long and full of really valuable information about the movements of the enemy's troops. There were telegrams too from various Military Attachés in the Balkans, few of which were of any value. We often used to get the same information from French G.Q.G., thus creating an impression that the Military Attachés in the Balkans lived by taking in each other's washing. This is not intended to be a sneer at Military Attachés, whose position in time of war is difficult. They are really War Office spies on the Embassies and Legations to which they are posted; but few of them have the courage to admit this to themselves, and in the struggle between the vested interests of Government Departments, which war quickens as it quickens everything, the poor Military Attaché usually comes off worst of anybody.

The information from V used to be sent in a special Secret Service cipher which would have furrowed the protuberant forehead of a Senior Wrangler. Eddie Keeling used to sit muttering curses, with a small ruler marked in millimetres in one hand and in the other the minute pocket dictionary in which after some linear arithmetic the ruler found the hidden word. I was inclined to accuse him of making unnecessarily heavy weather over these telegrams

from V. A few months later I was to have a first hand acquaintance with the infernal ingenuity of that Secret Service cipher, and I then realized how deeply I had wronged poor Keeling. To compromise that cipher it would have been necessary for the enemy to get hold of the right pocket dictionary, then to secure the right ruler, and finally to discover on what system the ruler and the dictionary were used. Later on, to make the cipher doubly safe this system was changed every month.

"You'll see the way to keep the Summary, by the few days I did at the beginning," Lloyd told me.

"All right, but what does 'redif' mean, Lloyd?"

He shook his head in despair.

"Do you mean to say you don't even know that? Well, you'd better read through this book, which will tell you something about the Turkish army."

He gave me a small volume published by the War Office, armed with which any British officer was presumed to be capable of going to war against the Turks without making an ass of himself. Here I discovered the difference between the Nizam or first line of troops and the Redif or troops of the first and second reserve. I also learned to count up to a hundred in Turkish, and the Turkish for everything military from a regiment to a latrine. Thus mentally equipped and with a japanned tin box to contain my paper, pencils, pens, and ink I settled down to do my bit in the Great War for Civilization.

Meanwhile, on May the twenty-fifth, the *Triumph* had been torpedoed off Gaba Tepé by the newly-arrived German submarine. We saw from the *Arcadian* survivors being taken on board the *Lord Nelson*, which was lying in Kephalo harbour. Some were stark naked, some had boots and nothing else, while a few more were wrapped in signal flags. Most of the drowned might have been saved if they had not succumbed to cerebral congestion brought on by

swallowing so much salt water immediately after their midday meal. Admiral de Robeck came on board looking very glum, and as a result of his visit a cargo boat was moored close up on either side of the *Arcadian*. Later that afternoon the Admiral himself in the *Lord Nelson* accompanied by three French battleships went zigzagging out of Kephalo for the safety of Mudros. We were inclined to think in the *Arcadian* that the Admiral had moored these confounded ships alongside as a kind of grim joke to teach us soldiers to appreciate some of the literally darker shades of a life on the ocean wave. At that time we were under the impression that the boom stretched across the entrance of the roadstead was genuine, with such meticulous solemnity had the ceremony of opening and closing it every time a vessel entered or left the roadstead always been performed. Not until we had taken ourselves ashore did we learn that the boom had consisted of nothing more formidable than a line of old fishing-nets attached to floating corks.

Existence below decks in the *Arcadian* was now a misery, for there was no light in any of the cabins, and while one of our protecting craft smelt strongly of cheese, the other, being loaded with sheep and mules, pumped into us a steady stream of those accursed flies from which hitherto we had been mercifully free. That night some destroyers tried to imagine they had seen a submarine, and there was a great deal of dashing about and firing of rockets. About two in the morning I was wakened by an orderly's coming into my cabin and handing me a signal to announce that two aeroplanes had been observed going south from the Peninsula. How he had contrived to fancy that I was a suitable recipient for such information was a mystery ; but that first day of equipping myself with the necessary vocabulary to go to war with Turkey had exhausted me too much to sit up in my bunk and wait for their arrival.

The next day I had my first sight of Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett. The Official War Correspondent, a slim man in khaki with a soft felt hat the colour of verdigris, a camera slung round his shoulders, and an unrelaxing expression of nervous exasperation, walked along the deck with the air of one convinced that his presence there annoyed everybody, and that we all wanted a jolly good dose of physic. Presently he came away from an interview with Sir Ian Hamilton, looking the way Cassandra must have often looked some three thousand years before. After telling me that the whole Expedition was doomed to failure and that he expected to be torpedoed in the *Majestic* he left the ship. I have learnt since from his book *The Uncensored Dardanelles* that he had just been refused permission to send in to the Press an article in which he had set forth clearly the many reasons why the Expedition could never possibly succeed. The next day his prophecy about the *Majestic* came true, for she was torpedoed off Cape Helles, after which he left for Malta and London, his slim exasperated form inhabited, one could fancy, by some god hostile to the Expedition. Yet probably the amount of harm Ashmead-Bartlett's pessimism wrought at home has been over-estimated. He was, after all, only one extra sack of coal unloaded on a Newcastle of ill-will.

It was impossible for us to remain indefinitely in the fly-haunted, heavy-smelling, airless abode which the *Arcadian* had now become. So arrangements were made to pitch a camp temporarily for G.H.Q. on the promontory of Kephalo in a country of rolling dunes edged by low cliffs which crumbled like dry biscuit at a touch. It was not a good site to choose, because it was obvious that with the summer heats the shallow-rooted herbage would wither and the place become a desert of whirling sand. Closer at hand and sheltered from the worst of the heat by fig-trees and olives and the afternoon shadow of the hills was a level stretch

of ground cultivated by the inhabitants of a squalid little hamlet. This would have made an excellent site for our camp ; but it was natural that the heads of G.H.Q. should dislike giving an impression that they were making themselves too comfortable, and there was an equally intelligible dread of suggesting that our chosen quarters were likely to be anything but temporary. We were not to think what the Kephalo dunes would be in July. We were to think ' Yes ' and thus try by thinking ' Yes ' to beat down the ' No ' principle which mocked us from Whitehall. Sir Ian Hamilton has been sneered at for his optimism, but what other attitude could he have taken up ? He was in the position of a man who has to coax jibbing mules along by holding carrots in front of them. Mr. Churchill having tried rougher methods had been badly kicked in the process, and the one man who could have seen the Dardanelles Expedition through to a triumphant end was now Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, occupying that armchair in the Cabinet which used to be reserved for octogenarian politicians to lean back and dream of their maiden speeches fifty years ago. After the treatment accorded to the First Lord of the Admiralty Sir Ian Hamilton may be forgiven for supposing that the only chance he had to overcome the mulish prejudice against the Expedition in England, France, and Egypt was to humour it. We who now sit at ease, able to contemplate that tragedy from a remote tranquillity or to peruse it in the pages of a book, in pages that are so quickly turned over to ascertain what is coming, so easily turned back to find out what should have been done, we shall perhaps be wisest after the event if we bow before the ineluctable purpose of Destiny. It is in such a mood of humility that one who was there when that tragedy was being written day by day in blood sets it on record that for him with every diminishing year the figure of his Commander-in-Chief grows larger not less.

And now let the trivial intervene once more, which (D.G.) the trivial has a way of doing even in tragedies.

There were just not enough tents to go round, so Eddie Keeling and I being the juniors of G.H.Q. were given the last one to share. This was lucky for me, because I was still without a batman, though I was hoping to get one from my Division presently, and I was now able to share Keeling's sprightly if somewhat volatile attendant. Such was the splendour of my companion's toilet equipment that our tent became a regular place of pilgrimage for 'these soldiers' to visit and inhale as it were an authentic whiff of Bond Street air. Keeling possessed three shaving-brushes, the least of which was quite three times as large as the largest any of us had ever seen in actual use. They used to stand up like three bushy silvery-grey shrubs, and not even the wretched cock-eyed shelf of packing-case wood on which they grew could destroy the lushness of their appearance. He wielded, too, the largest indiarubber sponges we had ever seen, great honeycombs fit for the spoilt bees of Hybla or Hymettus. At that time, I fancy, his patent sleeping-tent had not arrived, or perhaps it was that he and his batman had not yet solved the secret of its erection. This was an affair of green canvas which was mounted on a camp-bed and inside which, visible through a window of green gauze, the sleeper looking like a large wax doll in a Noak's Ark dreamed the night away unvexed by insects. When the weather became too damnably hot this bed was pitched outside, and there, his ciphers beside him on the pillow like a child's toys, Eddie slept in the glimmering starshine. We used to go and gaze at him as one goes on tiptoe to gaze at an infant in his cot. But nothing disturbed his perfect sleep, neither we nor the croaking of the frogs nor the distant booming of the Helles guns. Once when an urgent telegram arrived about midnight I remember accompanying an excited officer to wake Eddie

for its solution. There we saw him, by the light of our lantern, breathing placidly.

"An urgent telegram, Keeling!"

The Infant Jupiter stirred drowsily.

"Undo the curtains," he murmured from the cave where he was hidden from the ruthless jaws of Chronos.

"But aren't you going to get up, Keeling?"

"Why should I get up? Hold the lantern still."

And, while we held it, he raised himself upon his elbow and rapidly deciphered the groups of figures.

"It was hardly worth waking me up for," he said with a hint of bland severity. "Fasten the curtain properly."

And I vow before we had done so he was fast asleep again.

But I must not make it appear as if Keeling's breaches of the conventions of active service were the only ones to make our tent famous. My own silk pyjamas caused a certain amount of surprise.

"You can't wear silk pyjamas on active service."

"Why not?"

"Well, they look ridiculous."

"Damn what they look like. It's much easier to wash silk in cold water than those braided affairs you all wear, looking like Hungarian bandsmen in flannelette."

And then there was the question of my having breakfast in bed.

"You can't have breakfast in bed on active service!"

"Why not?"

"Well, it looks ridiculous."

"It would not only look, it would actually be ridiculous if I ate that horrible tinned bacon which provides you with an illusion that you have eaten an English breakfast, with the sound of the lawn-mower coming in through the windows of the dining-room. But all I eat is one boiled egg. I eat it under my mosquito-net, having been almost the only one out here who had the sense to provide himself with a

mosquito-net. The result is that, as soon as I have shelled it and removed the marks of my servant's fingers, I am able to eat the only definitely clean piece of food I obtain throughout the day. Hundreds of thwarted flies sit on the roof of my mosquito-net and glare down at me, or scratch one hind leg against the other in despair at not getting a taste of my egg. I then dress at leisure and arrive in the I tent sometimes five minutes even before George Lloyd and usually in a much better temper than anybody else except Eddie Keeling. What is the objection to breakfast in bed ? "

" Well, I don't know, but nobody else does it."

" That, my dear Val, must be one of those Winchester notions of yours which you will do well to rid yourself of."

This particular discussion of the etiquette of life on active service would have been with Valentine Braithwaite, the son and A.D.C. of General Braithwaite,* the Chief of the General Staff.

He could hardly have been more than nineteen, a subaltern in the Somerset Light Infantry, who had fought through the Mons retreat. He had been awarded one of the first Military Crosses in the war, and they were not given in those days for anything except very conspicuous gallantry. The comparative worldliness of Keeling and myself attracted him, for he could make friends with us in a way that he could not have done with men of the same age in his own profession, where all sorts of conventions of seniority would have interfered. So he was always completely at his ease with us, and therefore as simple and candid as if we had all three gone through the world of school together. I have many beautiful memories of that time, but few more beautiful than the walks with Eddie Keeling and Val Braithwaite across those rolling flowery links during the first two or three weeks after we went ashore. In that rich light of

*General Sir Walter Braithwaite, K.C.B.

afternoon I still see the crimson of the Cretan bugloss, the vivid stars of a diminutive rock-pink, wild hollyhocks, anchusas, saxifrages, and here and there in the damp hollows of the creamy dunes thickets of rosy oleanders. I still watch that lark's nest we once found with the henbird sitting close, and I still hear across the pale golden-blue of the afternoon sea the thunder of the Helles guns.

'A desolate tract preserving in its endless peaks and ridges the last fantastic glissades and diversely elevated cones into which the wind had gathered and swept the sand. Mostly, these towans presented to the beach a long line of serrated cliffs perhaps forty feet high; but from time to time they would break away to gullies full of fine drifted sand, whose small cavities hoarded snail-shells wind-dried to an ethereal lightness.'

I wrote those words in *Carnival* to describe a scene in Cornwall, and they will serve so exactly for the landscape of Cape Kephalo that I hesitate eighteen years later to attempt a second description of such country. In the Cornish scene the Atlantic tides gave the beach a difference from hour to hour. Here the almost tideless Ægean left the same narrow beach of soft sand at the foot of the low biscuit-coloured cliffs; and walking along this beach we made the most absurd plans for the time after the war, which always in the end came back to one particular plan. It was a perpetual source of wonder to Val Braithwaite that I should know so many of what to him were still those mythical creatures called 'actresses', and this particular plan was that I should give a dinner-party at the earliest possible moment after the war to several of these lovely semi-divine beings, at which he was to be a guest. That dinner-party became for the boy a favourite fairy tale; and I had to tell it over and over again, walking along that narrow beach of soft sand within sound of the guns and the sudden bursts of distant rifle-fire, which as it came to us here across that pale

golden-blue sea, was hardly more menacing than the musketry of gorse-pods exploding in the summer sun. That dinner-party has remained a fairy tale. After the Dardanelles were abandoned Val Braithwaite went back to his regiment and was killed in France; but I think that, were I ever to walk again along that narrow sandy beach, I should find myself telling that fairy tale yet once more to a tall sunburnt young Wykehamist beside me, though the Helles guns should be silent as his voice for evermore, and only the larks should be singing above those rolling dunes of Kephalo where so many hopes withered that Summer like the grass, but never like the grass grew green again in Spring.

For the first few weeks we were ashore the O Mess and the I Mess were joined in a sociable diphthong, which was pleasant, for a society of men like G.H.Q. under the conditions of camp life breaks up too easily into mutually hostile cliques. The strain of responsibility, the monotony, the discomfort, to which in our case was added the perpetual gnawing doubt inside every one of us whether we should ever advance another couple of miles on the road to Constantinople, combined to make life difficult for most of the Staff. However, for the first month that joint Mess in spite of the intolerable cooking and the myriads of flies was a jolly place. I had by now lost my self-consciousness and felt perfectly at home. I believe, if I were to try to fix the exact beginning of that sudden sense of ease which had so delightfully arrived, it would have been when I heard one officer say to another officer considerably senior to himself:

"I hear, sir, that Birdie* has got his K.C.S.I."

"Well, I'm not surprised," snapped the Senior. "He's been writing home for it ever since he came out here."

For a moment I half expected to look up and see the lean sardonic ghost of Henry Irving at the head of the table, for

*Field Marshal Sir William Birdwood, Bt., G.C.B., G.C.M.G., K.C.S.I., C.I.E., D.S.O.

it was just such a remark as Irving might have made. 'These soldiers are human,' I said to myself, 'of like jealousies with authors, actors, painters, prizefighters, ballet-girls, and barmaids.' And, as I looked down the long trestle-table and saw how intensely and completely human they all were, a delicious relief came over me and my self-consciousness fled never to return again at G.H.Q.

Another source of relief was getting rid of that detestable moustache, which had become as unmanageable as a badly-trained Airedale terrier. As soon as I saw that Guy Dawnay* was clean-shaven I had it off, for what was good enough for Guy Dawnay in the way of appearance was good enough for anybody. Dawnay was on the Peninsula when I first reached the *Arcadian*, and I had been awaiting his arrival with some eagerness, for though I had never met him, he was the brother-in-law of an old friend of mine, Robin Buxton, and he was like myself a Magdalen man. We most of us conjure people to the mind's eye as they appeared on some particular occasion, and the picture Guy Dawnay always makes first in mine is of standing on the beach by the landing stage when a group of less severely wounded officers from the Royal Naval Division were slowly coming down the slope on the evening of the Fourth of June to embark in a lighter and go aboard a hospital ship. Dawnay stood there, a fragile figure with something of exquisitely fashioned porcelain in the finely chiselled features of his small face. His red tabs, his red and blue brassard, and the red hackle of the Coldstream in his helmet glowed in the evening sun. He stood for a moment still as a faience statuette. Then he turned to me, a look in his eyes not of pain exactly, nor of pity, nor of grief entirely, nor of wistfulness, nor yet quite of apology, but somehow compounded of all five :

"Let's get out of their way," he said, pulling me aside in

*Major-General G. P. Dawnay, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., M.V.O.

the opposite direction from that procession of wounded men, who with bloodstained bandages round their heads or arms or hands were coming mutely and slowly and wearily down the dusty slope. "They won't want to see us just now," he murmured more to himself than to me.

This may give an aspect of Guy Dawnay which has evidently escaped some people, for he had a dry, sometimes indeed a wry wit, and he did not bother to spare those he disliked or, it might be more accurate to say, those he despised. Lord Sackville told me once that when he was a lecturer at the Staff College he always used to watch Guy Dawnay's face and when his lip began to curl he took that as a danger-signal and began to draw toward the close of his discourse. Anyway, perhaps I have said enough to justify myself for believing that if Guy Dawnay could do without a moustache there was no need for me to encumber myself any longer with mine.

And as I read through what I have written about Dawnay I realize that I have been trying to find an illustration from a more remote antiquity to convey the picture of him standing there with the evening sun aglow upon the hackle in his helmet; but his prototype must be sought in a Trojan scene of the middle-ages, and found at last perhaps in the corner of a picture by Crivelli where one of those small figures of warriors in the foreground seems to have detached itself from the crowded scene of chivalry behind and to have stepped forward from the past to commune with ourselves.

The chief associate of Guy Dawnay in the O tent was Cecil Aspinall.* Nothing outwardly medieval or subtle or elusive here. This would be the fair and handsome Fusilier, monocle in eye, who might serve as a frontispiece to any novel of military life. This is surely something very like the 'masher' of an earlier period, and one listens to hear if he will begin to talk about 'huntin' and fishin', don't you

*Brig.-General C. F. Aspinall-Oglander, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.

know ? ' so that one may note how a social type one had supposed extinct will linger on when a suitably conservative milieu like the Army is provided for it. But I had not talked for two minutes to Cecil Aspinall before I found that brain was his god, not brawn. It would be impertinence for me to attempt to estimate his ability as a staff-officer ; but I can affirm that he was a remarkable judge of character and that when I heard he was to be the Official Historian of the Dardanelles Campaign I said to myself, ' That is the best man they could have chosen.' The idea of writing fascinated him. I believe he began to write on military subjects after the Ashanti Campaign of 1900, to which he somehow succeeded in getting out on a Staff job almost as soon as he left Sandhurst, and the black and emerald ribbon of which shone out on his breast like a green-hairstreak butterfly beside the two South African ribbons which were as common at G.H.Q. as small tortoiseshells in Summer and orange-tips in Spring. I am glad to say that Aspinall did not always fail to play up to his dashing exterior by being too coldly intellectual. His pleasure in the shining oak-leaves that wreathed the glossy peak of his new cap, which must have been cabled for as soon as he heard he was to be recommended for a brevet-majority, so quickly did it arrive, was unabashed ; and my own personal vanity is so regrettably marked that, if Aspinall had cabled at the same time for a cheval-glass to take the place of the small hand-mirror that swung from his tent-pole and gave so inadequate a reflection of his new splendour, I should probably have made as much use of it as the owner, for just about the time his new cap came my uniform arrived from Alexandria.

And now having tried to sketch in two of those three Captains at G.H.Q. who are now Generals, let me try to give an impression of the third. Wyndham Deedes* was a Rifleman who before the war had held an appointment in

*Brig.-General Sir Wyndham Deedes, C.M.G., D.S.O.

the Turkish Gendarmery. He spoke Turkish perfectly, and nobody more entirely fitted for the position he occupied as head of Ib could have been found anywhere. I had heard so much talk about 'Dedez Bey' when I arrived that I looked forward with something like excitement to my first sight of this mysterious omniscient figure to whom ultimately it seemed that every question of Intelligence would have to be referred, even the suitable employment of my humble self. I must have dreamed of him in as many shapes and sizes as Jim Hawkins dreamed of that one-legged mariner who according to Billy Bones was the most dangerous of Flint's unemployed pirates. I saw a small man with high cheek bones and a long upper lip, on which grew the ghostly semblance of a very fair moustache, so faint and fine indeed that only when it caught the sun's rays did one suspect that it was intended to be a moustache at all. His countenance wore almost continuously that expression combined of asceticism, determination, and illimitable efficiency which you may often see on the Superior of an Anglican Sisterhood, and this conventual look was somehow emphasized by his habit of never wearing a sun-helmet, but always a cap with a puggaree which on Deedes managed to look not unlike a nun's wimple. He was just as indifferent as George Lloyd to anything that savoured of luxury; but whereas Lloyd's tent had a kind of dreary discomfort that made one wish his batman could do something about it, Deedes's tent had the trim sparseness of a church-helper's room at the top of a clergy house. Lloyd would never have made himself morning tea. Deedes always did, moving quickly and nattily about his tent in a sober-coloured practical dressing-gown, while the kettle sang on the spirit-lamp a genial song of home. And I think, when I have mentioned that cup of tea and the dressing-gown, I have mentioned the extent of Deedes's self-indulgence. Of him several pictures spring to my

mind's eye as I try to recapture the impression of his austere, yet always delightfully humorous and somehow curiously reassuring personality ; but perhaps the one most persistent is that of Deedes sitting in a tent on W beach and writing away at some report of a prisoner's examination, regardless of flies and dust and rattling wheels and the perpetual chance of high-explosive shells. He raises his hand for a moment from the paper to hush my proposed interruption, and I feel while I wait there until he has finished that I have no business to be wishing that Deedes would hurry up and let me get away from the chance of a shell's blowing him and me to pieces, until gradually his own equanimity is communicated to myself and I am only aware of a blessed atmosphere in which *laborare est orare*, and the din of Helles dies away into a kind of cloistral calm.

It was Deedes who invited me to take on the business of collecting and indexing all the contre-espionage stuff which had been accumulating for some time and thereby gave me an opportunity to pass on the Intelligence Summary to Graves who seized it with as much avidity as a dog a bone. I fear that the few pages of it I wrote will not have given much pleasure to Cecil Aspinall in his capacity as Official Historian ; but my conscience is not disturbed, for I know that Graves's well-prepared galantine will more than compensate for the amateurishly chopped and somewhat stringy dish of mincemeat I offered. Besides, it really did one's heart good to see the gusto with which Graves sat down in that broiling tent to get to work on the Intelligence Summary. Eddie Keeling's eyebrows went rippling up across the smooth expanse of his forehead in ever widening arches of amazement.

" This Consular enthusiasm is most touching," he murmured. " I think I'll get him to take down some telegrams for me. I rather want to bathe earlier."

On the second of June Orlo Williams and I walked to

Panaghia, the chief village of Imbros, about fifteen miles from Kephalo along a rough bridle track that wound through flowery valleys between sage-green stony hills. About half-way there we came upon a couple of tents pitched on a level sward in the shade of primeval holm-oaks, and there, seeming as far removed from the cares of office as Saturn himself, Clive Bigham, the Provost-Marshal, with some of those Military Field Police Kenny and I had rescued for him from Tenedos. He was busy taking the necessary measures to put Imbros under proper surveillance with a view to investigating cases of alleged signalling to the enemy with bonfires on the hill tops. As an old campaigner in this part of the world he knew how to make himself comfortable, and sometimes on the dust-maddened Peninsula for a cool thought I would fancy that glade in the heart of Imbros and the sound of his horse feeding and the rustling pages of his pocket editions of Homer and Virgil, to read which in that pastoral land where life had changed so little in many hundreds of years was to be keeping oneself up to date.

Was it in Bigham's camp I first met John Thomson? Or was it under the vine-wreathed portico of the café at Panaghia in whose trellised shade we sat and ate our hard-boiled eggs, with not so much as a child in the empty, sunny street to stare at us? Or was it not to-day at all that I first met Thomson? It does not matter. Thomson is associated in my mind with Panaghia, and to-day will serve as well as any for that first meeting.

Of all the thousands who, whether in the thick of it or merely on the fringe, went through the Dardanelles Campaign, John Thomson was perhaps the only man who enjoyed every moment of it. What would in the jargon of the Regimental Sergeant-Major be called Thomson's military history—and at this point I really must allow myself the luxury of a digression in which to set on record a story that

Edmund Gwenn once told me. Gwenn, who had enlisted at the beginning of the war in the Royal Artillery, was horrified one day to hear the harsh voice of an orderly shout in the barrack-room :

" Bombardier Gwenn to see the Sergeant-Major at once! "

He entered the presence, wondering nervously what military misdeed was responsible for the summons.

" Bombardier Gwenn," said the great man, who was twisting his waxed moustache and turning over some papers without vouchsafing a glance at the insignificant atom quaking before his desk, " Bombardier Gwenn, I have been looking through your military history. I find that before you joined His Majesty's Forces you were an actor. The Sports will be held next Thursday afternoon. You will dress up as a woman and amuse the women and children between the events. Right-about ! "

And now to return to Thomson's military history which indicated that he was a business man in Constantinople, and incidentally the brother-in-law of Graves, who had married his sister ; but that was only what Thomson appeared to the world. The real Thomson was galloping over the prairies with the last of the Mohicans, or rolling out wicked old buccaneering ditties on the Dry Tortugas or saying ' Dr. Livingstone, I presume,' at the back of the Congo, or standing beside stout Cortez (though never silent) upon a peak in Darien. For years Thomson had gone to bed after a long day in the office with a couple of pistols under his pillow, hoping against hope that something would happen one night to give him an excuse to fire them off. For years Thomson had been collecting every kind of tool, implement, gadget, cooking-appliance, explorer's vade mecum, tent, snake-proof boots, sleeping-blanket, hurricane-lamp, helmet, and Heaven knows what else that the most exacting maroon might dream of to turn a desert island into a Sybaris.

Just when Thomson must have been beginning to find it difficult to get hold of anything new in the way of equipment for an adventure, the war came. And now here was Lieutenant Thomson ruling the interior of Imbros with more satisfaction than Alexander the Great got out of ruling half the world. Here was Thomson armed with three pistols, not to mention half a dozen compendiums of knives of such versatility that after three or four eager flurried clickings and unclickings he could offer you a blade that was fine enough to extract a bee-sting from your thumb or one fierce enough to amputate your whole arm, should you feel in the mood for drastic measures. In addition to his pistols and these colonies of knives he had two or three patent knapsacks, one of which, I believe, could either be used as a fly-proof meat-safe or a collapsible boat. And then I seem to remember a lot of pots and pans and patent stoves clanking round his waist; but, of course, I may be exaggerating a little, because Thomson was always so enthusiastic about his gadgets and so eager to bring them into action that he may have bewildered me with some of his *multa in parvis*, and out of one small saucepan created for my fancy a whole ironmonger's shop. How Thomson was enjoying himself! Burnt to a colour to which boiled lobsters, tan-yards, brickdust, chestnuts, umber, and cardinals' hats had all contributed their quota of ripe hues, he came clanking down the empty, sunny street of Panaghia without an ounce of spare flesh and with all that weight of spare parts. He spoke Turkish and Greek fluently, so that he was invaluable to Clive Bigham whose Number Two and more violent executive he was.

Later on, when I had taken over the documentation of our suspects, I grew rather tired of Thomson's generosity in the matter of spies which he used to offer me at thirteen for twelve. He was a man of incessant energy, and his native helpers were so tirelessly hustled about by him that

they went ranging over the countryside like foxhounds, for of course Thomson had several patent whistles to call them to heel when necessary. He was the kindest creature imaginable, and if you wanted to make him your friend for life you had only to ask him some simple traveller's question like this :

"Thomson, where do you think it's best to keep one's pistols at night ?"

And then his bright enthusiastic eyes would glitter like the Ancient Mariner's and he would go into the whole question so thoroughly that you had satisfactorily winged half the blackguards in Europe before he had finished with giving you tips about looking after yourself in a country where brigands were at all thick or where Red Indians still went on the war-path. I cannot remember what happened to Thomson when Gallipoli was evacuated ; but in 1917 he came, now a Captain, within my orbit in the Ægean, and I appointed him to administer for a while the island of Zea ; but there for some reason or other he developed an extraordinary passion for jam, which was about the only thing with which Zea could not provide him, and which happened to be equally difficult to obtain on Syra in the quantity and variety Thomson craved. In the end I had to write him an admonitory sonnet which ended :

*But cease to ask us any more for jams,*
*In undecipherable telegrams.*

Well, I hope I have not exaggerated about the place where I met Thomson as much as I am afraid I have exaggerated a little, but only a very little, about dear Thomson himself. I can see him now covered with dust and armed to the teeth, standing at the most rigid attention in the I tent and trying to make Deedes's flesh creep about a spy—Deedes looking as calm and judicial as a youthful Mother Superior to whom

one of the older Sisters is relating a vision she has just been granted of some holy saint among the pea-sticks in the convent-garden, and Eddie Keeling sitting within earshot looking ridiculously bland, but as I, who knew his habits can see, swelling rapidly with invisible and inaudible laughter. It was very lucky I unloaded the Intelligence Summary on to Graves when I did, because there is no doubt that his brother-in-law had an eye on him as a useful Whip. Fond though Graves was of exercise, I think even he might have grown tired of rushing about over the rugged hills of Imbros and when he was out of breath perpetually blowing one of Thomson's patent whistles to bring his coast-watchers to heel.

We were sorry to say good-bye to Thomson that hot afternoon (if we really did meet him that afternoon) and start off on those blazing fifteen miles back to Kephalo. Like an ass I had taken off my jacket on the walk out and turned up my sleeves, so that my arms were raw where the sun had blistered them. I really begin to think that Thomson could not have been in Panaghia that day, because if he had been I am sure he would have had the very ointment for my sunburn, a pot of which like D'Artagnan's mother he would have straitly enjoined on me never to be without. The thought of that last mile of soft sandy seaweed-matted beach before we reached the camp makes my legs ache to this day. Somebody else was with us; but the memory of that walk back is dim with the heat of it and I can only remember the long legs of Orlo Williams keeping doggedly on and on just in front of me, and the tired flies that would keep trying to get a lift on my neck.

It was the day after this grilling thirty-mile walk that Sir Ian Hamilton sent for me to ask if I would like to take on Ashmead-Bartlett's job. I replied that if I were going to write out here I would sooner act as Official Eyewitness and keep my commission, but that I had not come out with

the idea of writing and should prefer to stay as I was. I believe that I was speaking quite sincerely, but one is never secure against the prompting of petty vanity, and that may have made my reply sound a little pompous. Sir Ian evidently thought I was talking rubbish and asked me if I realized that Bartlett was getting £2,000 a year for his job. I answered that I would rather have less and keep my commission. He said that there was no question of giving up my commission. Finally he telegraphed to Lord Kitchener to tell him that Bartlett was on his way home and that meanwhile he was appointing me in his place pending the decision of the Newspaper Proprietors' Association whether they would keep me on or send out another correspondent. Then he told me to go and have a talk with Maxwell* the Censor and find out from him the technique of sending a despatch to the Press. Feeling doubtful of my ability to do this job well, I left Sir Ian's tent to tackle Maxwell. Even in those days there was a much sharper line of demarcation between journalists and novelists than there is now, and I fully expected that Maxwell would resent what he with his own long experience as a war-correspondent would consider the pushing forward of a mere 'literary gent' at his expense. Maxwell was a self-important little man rather more like Tweedledum than anybody I have seen except the pictures of Tweedledee. As soon as he heard my news his wattles reddened.

"Sir Ian should realize," said Maxwell, "that he cannot behave in this high-handed way. The Newspaper Proprietors will not be dictated to by him. They will strongly resent having an amateur foisted upon them in this way. Why did not Sir Ian consult me before he took this extraordinary step? This will do him a great deal of harm with the Press. And I'm afraid it may be rather unpleasant for you."

*The late Captain Sir William Maxwell, K.B.E.

"Are you suggesting that I have manœuvred myself into this job, Maxwell?"

"That may be the impression in Fleet Street, where they have a horror of the amateur."

"Well, why don't you go and explain that to Sir Ian, Maxwell? Perhaps he'll ask you to act as correspondent. Only don't suggest that I should edit your Dardanelles Driveller."

Maxwell, in addition to acting as Official Censor and running the OI Mess was editing a daily sheet called *The Peninsula Press* which was served out to the troops as a tonic and even translated into French. This was the apple of Maxwell's eye.

"If Sir Ian requires my services he has only to ask for them," said Maxwell, wagging his head as gloomily as some old actor over an upstart Hamlet. "If he chooses to ignore my presence here and involve himself with the Press, that is his own look-out."

"The Press can refuse to print anything from me if they feel offended. After all, Sir Ian did not send Bartlett home. He asked to go in order to get together a fresh kit. It is true that Sir Ian has cabled he does not want him back. But he has left it to the Newspaper Proprietors to send out somebody else."

I saw it would be useless to try to convince Maxwell that my sending despatches to the Press, until Bartlett came back or somebody else was sent to replace him, was not a plot to push me into a post to which I was not entitled, so I soothed his smarting dignity by asking what the red and white ribbon on his breast signified.

"The Rising Sun of Japan," he proclaimed with some unction.

"You were out in the Russian-Japanese war, of course."

"I was with General Kuroki until the Battle of the Shaho and I was with General Nogi at Port Arthur."

I listened for a while to a few solemn reminiscences.

"Well, I hope you won't have to use the blue pencil too hard on my despatches, Maxwell."

"I shall treat your stuff exactly as I should treat that of any other correspondent," he replied with a stately gesture of pardon and conscious equity.

The whole question of a military censorship has been raised again by Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett in his book *The Uncensored Dardanelles*, in order to voice a resentment which apparently has been rankling all these years at the way his despatches were treated. He was longing to publish his conviction that Sir Ian Hamilton was making a mess of the Dardanelles Campaign by not listening to his advice and landing at Bulair; but it was not until 1928 that we were privileged to learn what he wanted to tell England in 1915. Whether he was right or not he must have known that he could hardly persuade Sir Ian Hamilton to change his mind, and if he wished to remain as the only war-correspondent with the Expedition, it was his duty to sacrifice his opinions with as much self-abnegation as others were sacrificing their lives.

On the third of June Ashmead-Bartlett wrote in his diary: *At sea in Caledonia. Nothing to record.*

They were just as much at sea on that sandy promontory of Kephalo, where no answer had yet been received to that vital telegram of the seventeenth of May.*

They were just as much at sea in Paris where Lord Bertie would write in his diary that night: *It is really expected that the Dardanelles will be taken by land operations in a*

*I had just written this sentence when I thought I would refer to Sir Ian Hamilton's *Gallipoli Diary* lest I should be misrepresenting his state of mind, and under the date of June 2nd I read:

*De Robeck and Keyes are quite as much at sea as Braithwaite and myself about this original scheme of the British Government for treating a tearing, raging crisis; i.e., by taking no notice of it. I guess that never before in the history of war has a Commander asked urgently that his force might be doubled and then got no orders; no answer of any sort or kind!*

*month from now! Let us hope that this is not another false prophecy added to the many.* They were just as much at sea on the Western Front where Sir John French and General Joffre were impressing on Mr. Asquith the necessity of sending all the available troops to them for an offensive which was to prove immeasurably more costly than any launched at Gallipoli and not a little bit more fruitful. They were just as much at sea on the Eastern Front where the Austrians were marching into Przemysl to-day and the Russians were retreating out of Galicia. The only place where they need not have been quite as hopelessly at sea was in London where the Ministers of the New Administration had just received from Mr. Winston Churchill a lucid note on the general situation written on the first of June. None of us is at sea now; but when from the safety of land we look back at that campaign, does it not seem as if we had veritably stirred up the old gods to fight for and against us as once they fought for and against the Trojans and the Greeks?

If Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett had had his *Iliad* with him in the *Caledonia* he might have studied the Second Book with profit on that idle third of June at sea.

"οἵκαδέ περ σὺν νηυσὶ νεώμεθα," said one.

And to him replied Odysseus:

"Θερσῖτ' ἀκριτόμυθε, λιγύς περ ἐὼν ἀγορητής
ἴσχεο, μήδ' ἔθελ' οἷος ἐριζέμεναι βασιλεῦσιν."

Or as one might paraphrase for the occasion, without straying far from a literal translation:

Thersites: "We ought to get our ships home before any more are sunk, and go home with them."

Any member of the G.S.: "Thersites, you ill-informed though brilliant chatterbox, shut up, and don't try to ram your private opinions down the throats of the General Staff."

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE BATTLE OF THE FOURTH OF JUNE

ABOUT ten o'clock on the morning of the Fourth of June, the destroyer *Wolverine* commanded by Lieut.-Commander Adrian Keyes, the younger brother of the Commodore, took us from Kephalo to Helles. Besides Sir Ian Hamilton himself, there were General Braithwaite, Colonel Ward, Aspinall, Dawnay, and several others of the General Staff. We steamed for nearly an hour toward the sound of guns that was coming down through a grey and indeterminate kind of day which very gradually changed to a clearer atmosphere. A northerly wind was blowing, such a wind as might shatter the chestnut-blossom in England 'on some tempestuous morn of early June,' and most of us found the ward-room a pleasanter place than the deck. Keyes was full of stories about his experiences in Canada at the very beginning of the war, when he manned a submarine with a crew of local business-men. I wish I could remember the details of the good stories he told us; but they have passed from my recollection irretrievably, and I can only remember the gold watch that was presented to him by his amateur crew. One of those Canadian business-men ought to give us the tale of that submarine's adventures: *Blackwood's Magazine* would be the proper medium. Keyes himself is no longer alive, and the little epic ought not to be lost eternally. If I had not been so much worried at the time by the prospect of having to send the Press a despatch about the imminent battle, I might have remembered the stories myself.

When we drew near to Helles and went on deck, a fog of dust was blowing off the shore and the gun-crews were going to their stations, for the *Wolverine* intended to bring her guns to bear on the Turkish trenches. The men stripped to the waist for action sent my thoughts whirring back to the big engraving of the Death of Nelson which used to hang in our hall at home, and which in childhood I had studied many a time for an hour at a stretch, in fancy a powder-monkey of the *Victory* myself, on whose books I was now borne as a Marine. Then among the transports and trawlers and various craft at anchor we saw all that was now visible of the *Majestic* like a small green whale motionless upon the water. She was subsiding rapidly, they said; and already in this watery sunlight she gave the illusion of slowly assuming to herself the nature of the waves that splashed against her still rigid sides. Such a dream of a ship's transmutation into her own element soon vanished in the billows of dust ashore, vanished in that queer heartlessness of war that is really the desperate occupation of the mind with something to do and therefore no time to dream. And yet there were still left a few moments to dream while we waited for the lighter to come alongside, and I was saying to myself that Lancashire Landing, the glorious name the Lancashire Fusiliers won for W beach, was the climax of all the castles in the sand that were ever built. No children at Blackpool or at Southport could ever have imagined in their most ambitious schemes this effect of grown-up industry. The comparison with a seaside resort on a fine bank holiday arrived so inevitably as really to seem rather trite. Yet all the time the comparison was justifying itself. Even the aeroplanes on the top of the low cliff eastward had the look of an 'amusement' to provide a threepenny or sixpenny thrill: the tents might so easily conceal phrenologists or fortune tellers: the signal station might well be a camera obscura: the very carts of the Indian

Transport, seen through the driven sand, had an air of waiting goat-carriages.

General Gouraud was on the sandbagged pier expecting Sir Ian Hamilton, as grave as one of those bearded French maîtres d'hôtel who has prepared a marvellous banquet for an important personage. We walked up the slope from the beach, blinded by the dust, choking, thinking of nothing except this dust, until there broke upon me the realization that all this time the guns had been thundering. Suddenly an empty stretch of desiccated scrub rolled away before us : the homely clatter of the beach was forgotten : there was nothing now but a noise of wind rising above the battery we were leaving behind us ; and for the eye nothing but the black and white telegraph-poles, their wires winking in the sun, and the imperturbable larks rising and falling. This empty stretch began on the skyline, and it was soon necessary to enter a trench originally dug by the Turks, good enough, it seemed, to withstand any but the heroes of that imperishable assault upon the Twenty-fifth of April. We hurried on, here and there almost sticking in the rank clay that was sometimes even wet enough to require a mattress of boughs for its passage. Finally we reached the ' shelter ' which was considerately labelled ' Low Doorway ' upon the lintel : there always seems something a little pathetic in these minor courtesies of war. The shelter consisted of four or five compartments hollowed out of the clay, and covered with sandbags over a ceiling of corrugated iron. The walls were hung with canvas, and each of the low oblong windows, as we leaned upon their high sills, provided a new aspect, framed in branches, of the battle three miles away. Somewhere behind us a sixty-pounder crashed at intervals : and we could hear the moan and rattle of the shell go forward on its way.

In front of the shelter, the country dipped gradually down to rise again more steeply beyond a wide and partially

wooded hollow. Here, through the glasses, could be seen a quantity of mules tranquil enough, notwithstanding the concentration of shell-fire that was sweeping and shrieking and buzzing over their heads to explode half-way up the opposite slope. Every shell burst with its own shape of smoke; and so substantial was the vapour that the wind could only carry it away bodily, unable for a long time to disperse it. The shrapnel puffs materialized from the air at first as small and white wads of cotton-wool; then they grew swiftly larger and turned to a vivid grey; then they became fainter again and travelled across the view like tadpoles of cloud, until at last they trailed their tails in a kind of fatigue before they dissolved against the sky. Heavy shells evoked volcanoes right along the line, and from the sea, like drums solemnly beaten, came the sound of the ships firing.

The calm within the shelter was oppressive, though the wind was fretting the grass and fluttering two magenta cistus flowers immediately outside the window. It seemed calm as we looked at the maps pegged out upon the trestle-tables; but it was ten minutes to twelve, and at twelve o'clock the advance would begin. A tortoise crawled laboriously past our straining binoculars. The gunfire lessened, and from the whole line the noise of musketry and maxims came sharply, a noise that was tenser than the guns, and more portentous. It was as though one had been listening to a change of orchestration in a symphony, as though after a heavy and almost dull opening the strings were leading to a breathless finale of the first movement.

Yet, as we stared through our glasses at twelve o'clock, there was scarcely any sign of action. Once indeed a large body of men were visible as they climbed the green slope; but they were soon lost to view, and notwithstanding the incessant scolding of the angry rifle-fire, we had nothing at which we could look except the mules standing motionless

in the hollow, and once down a ribbon of road an orderly galloping. Yet all the time messages were coming in along the wires ; all the time it was possible to mark with green and red and blue pencils a redoubt gained, a trench occupied, or at some point a check.

One of those fatal checks was to the Sixth Gurkhas who had found the barbed wire to the left of the Saghir Deré untouched by the bombardment. The Saghir Deré was a ravine west of Krithia which began in the sandy cliffs to the south-west of the Peninsula, where the Headquarters of the Twenty-ninth Division were now established. The sides were covered with a thick tangle of brushwood and ran down, sometimes sheer from a height of fifty feet, into a narrow bottom full of arbutus and the stones of a dried-up watercourse.

On the morning of the battle the Eighty-eighth Brigade held the country to the right ; on the left was the Indian Brigade which included the Lancashire Fusiliers. The Fourteenth Sikhs were astride the ravine linking their own Brigade, the Sixth Gurkhas on their left, with the Worcesters, who formed the left of the Eighty-eighth Brigade, by a line of trenches about one hundred and fifty yards wide.

On the west above the ravine the ground, matted with heather, cistuses, and various stunted shrubs, sloped upwards toward two lines of Turkish trenches which confronted us from a distance of two hundred yards and three hundred and fifty yards. On the east beyond our trenches the ground sloped downward to the edge of the ravine from a crest line about two hundred yards away, the distance between the two lines of trenches being two hundred and fifty yards. Both the Turks and our men had been using the ravine itself as a communicating trench with the rear. This piece of ground was unfortunately exposed by its aspect to the fire not only of the trenches in front, but more dangerously to that of the powerful trenches on

the other side of the Saghir Deré, which dominated not only the ravine itself, but also the open ground eastward up to the crest line.

This morning the Sikhs had been ordered to advance in two lines. The front line was to link the attack of the Indian Brigade with that of the Eighty-eighth Brigade by moving forward along the sides of the ravine, and so by a flank attack help the assault upon the trenches opposed to the Indian Brigade. The second line was to advance along the ravine to attack the second line of the enemy's trenches. The Turks had placed several small trenches across the bottom of the ravine, and there were probably several machine-guns well hidden on the steep slopes.

After that bombardment which ran from sea to sea the Allied line advanced at noon. On the right of the Saghir Deré the Eighty-eighth Brigade went forward with complete success, and the Worcesters, who were in touch with the Sikhs, actually charged through four lines of Turkish trenches as easily as Aspinall and Dawnay were marking down with coloured pencils their achievement on the map. The Sikhs, however, came full into the cross-fire of rifles and machine-guns as they moved over the exposed slope. Nevertheless the two companies did not falter in their determination, but kept pace with the advance of the Brigade. Notwithstanding their losses on the slope downward to the edge of the Saghir Deré they reached the Turkish trenches, carried them, and bayoneted the occupants, who tried to escape into the ravine. All day and night these two companies held the left of the trenches taken by the Eighty-eighth Brigade, and in the morning when they were relieved there remained one British officer, one Indian officer, and fourteen men.

Down in the ravine the day went badly for the Sikhs. The Sixth Gurkhas on their left had failed to carry the first line of Turkish trenches and their web of barbed wire

which the guns from the ships had left untouched. Relieved from anxiety from the Gurkhas the enemy was free to concentrate a violent fire on the attack up the Saghir Deré. Machine-guns opened on them from both sides at the moment they came out of their trenches. Four British officers and a quarter of the rank and file fell at once. A few groups gloriously led managed to clamber to the point at which they hoped to see the two companies of their first line in hot assault upon the enemy's trenches. But when with tremendous effort they arrived they saw that the frontal attack on their left had failed. Some dead ground gave them time to muster the survivors : a scar in the ravine was stormed : two machine-guns were dragged up : entrenchments were desperately dug : and thus they perched upon the side of the Saghir Deré—the Colonel, the Doctor, and forty-seven men. There all through the night they held on ; but in the morning the Turks from above bombed them back into the ravine. The crews of the guns had been killed, and, though the guns had to be abandoned, all that was left of the second line retired in good order. A bomb destroyed one gun : the other was afterwards recovered.

The other two companies of the first line had advanced with the rest of their own Brigade against the trenches in front of them ; but when the main attack had failed, they would not go back. All day by the edge of the Saghir Deré did they cling to their position ; and when at last they retired, they left three-quarters of their strength and every British officer behind.

That morning the Fourteenth (King George's Own) Sikhs moved out to the attack with fifteen British officers, fourteen Indian officers and five hundred and fourteen men. On the morning after, three British officers, three Indian officers, and one hundred and thirty-four men were left. No ground was given : no man turned his back : no man lingered on the way. The trenches of the enemy that ran

down into the ravine were choked with the bodies of Turks and Sikhs, lying there for ever at rest from that hell of hand to hand encounters. On the slope beyond, the bodies of those tall and grave warriors, all face downward where they fell indomitably advancing, lay thickly among the stunted aromatic scrub. Achi Baba was before them, and eastward the sun was rising out of Asia.

Standing there in the shelter, I saw Aspinall's face gnawed by anxiety as he pored over that check on the pegged-out map, knowing no more then of the history of it which I have just related than I did myself. Probably I felt awkwardly superfluous in the presence of his anxiety, for I know that soon after this I found myself in another compartment of the shelter with a naval officer beside me, who explained a little apologetically that he had come ashore as A.D.C. to the Commodore and had been given leave to look at the battle from the shelter. We chatted for a while, and presently he asked me if I had come out here from Flanders. I was gratified by the implication that I looked such a veteran, but admitted that I had as a matter of fact only come out here from Italy a few weeks ago.

"Oh, really? I'm frightfully keen on Italy," he avowed with enthusiasm. "I wonder if you know Capri by any chance?"

"That's where I live."

"I wonder if you know an uncle of mine, Colonel Palmes? I stayed with him in Capri two years ago. And now I want to get back there again to meet a man called Mackenzie. Do you know him?"

"Well, I think I must be the Mackenzie you mean."

"The man who wrote *Sinister Street?* Well, that's absolutely extraordinary! Do you know, I've had the two volumes of *Sinister Street* with me ever since February. I've read them both through at least three times, and some parts a good deal more than three times. I saved them from

going down in a torpedo-boat which was sunk under me, and I've saved them from going down in a trawler which was sunk under me. The t.b. was on the Canal."

I remembered the tale of the exploits of T.B. 043 on the Suez Canal, for the uncle of its gallant commander* had told me about that nephew of his who had just been given the D.S.O. We stood in that shelter and gazed at one another with frank admiration while the sixty-pounder crashed and moaned away behind and the magenta cistus flowers fluttered by the sill in the wind outside. I asked him what he was doing in these waters.

"Oh, I'm in charge of the mine-sweepers out here. But I thought this was a good chance to get ashore for a day. So I asked the Commodore to trot me along as his A.D.C."

Just then Colonel Ward looked in to say that fifty prisoners were coming in on our left, and asked me if I would like to walk along with him to meet them. I never saw Palmes again while I was at Gallipoli, and I have never met him since on Capri or anywhere else; but the memory of that ten minutes' talk fourteen years ago is still perfectly fresh.

The greyness of the morning had vanished by now, and the air outside was brilliant after the damp and gloom of the shelter when Colonel Ward and I started off along the road which ran by the cliff's edge toward the line of battle. Out at sea, escorted by destroyers, *Albion* and *Implacable*, their guns spurting vivid yellow from turrets that stood in blackest silhouette against the dazzle of the sea and the silver fume of the horizon, were steaming up and down at their slow and stately business and their solemn firing.

We met the escort of Worcesters just where a Red Cross flag was flying above the cliff burrows of the Field Ambulance. Some of the prisoners were badly wounded; these

*Commander G. B. Palmes, D.S.O., R.N.

were at once taken off for medical attention. The rest were halted, and several of the Worcesters came literally dancing round us, not yet free from that first wild elation of their charge. The dust and sweat caked upon their faces made it almost impossible to see where the khaki ended and the flesh began : they seemed like the clay models of a sculptor : and their bayonets lacked even so much lustre as tarnished foil. They were like children drunk with the thrills of some unusual adventure, as they skipped round us in their shorts, laughing and chattering of the deeds of their regiment ; and the plaster of dust obliterating all lines, all hair, all signs of age, made them appear more than ever like children. In contrast to their jubilation I see a tall ungainly Turk in his ill-fitting khaki uniform who looks at me in despair. I realize that he wants to step out of the ranks to make water. I nod assent, and, whether he has hurt himself internally or whether too long retention is the cause, the business is an agony, for he stands twisted in a fearful cramp, his face showing what he is suffering not by any contortions, but by such dumb pain as you may see in the eyes of an animal. I turn away sick at heart for him, and then one of the merry Worcesters dances round me and babbles once more his excited tale of a few minutes' madness.

" My gawd, sir, we went through them like paper. Four trenches, sir. Like paper. With the bayonet. Right through, sir ! At the double. Like paper. Four trenches, sir, you wouldn't believe ! At twelve to the tick. Like paper. Four trenches ! Well, I can't say I hardly knew what I was doing, or where I was going, and that's a fact. And then we found we'd took four trenches ! That's right, ain't it, Nobby ? Four trenches, sir. Coo ! It was a treat the way we got into 'em. You know, sir ? It was as good as a football match. Four trenches ! Well, nothing couldn't stop us."

" I say, Mackenzie," broke in the slow voice of Colonel

Ward. "Do you think you can make out what regiment these fellows belong to?"

I produced the War Office's handbook for fighting against Turkey, and after examining the numerals I felt fairly sure that it was a '15' on their collars. I decided to risk it, and going up to the prisoners who were all squatting down by the roadside now, I inquired, '*Umbesh alai?*'

Ali Baba could not have felt more astonished when he said 'Open Sesame' and the door of the Forty Thieves' cave actually did open, for I had no sooner spoken than all the prisoners leapt to their feet and saluted. They were beaming with excitement, and evidently most anxious to go on with the conversation. But to say 'Fifteenth Regiment' in Turkish was as much as I could manage, and the conversation had to stop there, leaving the prisoners and myself smiling at one another, until Deedes, his pugaree fluttering behind him, came hurrying up to examine them. The Turks were evidently delighted to have been taken, and they answered Deedes's questions with enthusiasm, squatting there in the dusty scrub, many of them wounded, but none complaining, and all of them grinning and nodding at the cigarettes their escort kept handing to them. It was impossible to examine the prisoners here more than cursorily, because a group so large might have drawn the enemy's fire: so they were presently marched down toward Lancashire Landing and the accommodation of the Assistant-Provost-Marshal, their delightful captors dancing along beside them like children bringing home some stray cows to the farm where they belonged.

When we went back in the shelter, there was still nothing visible of the battle's progress, and it was Aspinall, I think, whom I accompanied down to the Headquarters of the Twenty-ninth Division. Here, heralded by the telephone's petulant and gnatlike buzz, more details of the battle were coming in. The Worcesters were holding fast to those

trenches they had captured. Thinking of the men in that escort who had danced about in the road by the cliff's edge and chattered all together like children about their exploits, I took a ridiculous personal pride in the red lines that marked their achievement. Here I first heard definite news of the losses that the Indian Brigade had suffered by the Saghir Deré, though the full story of their desperate fight was of course still to be told. I heard too for the first time how the French had failed to hold the Haricot Redoubt on the right of the Naval Division, which had suffered a bloody enfilade in consequence from three tiers of trenches banked one above the other on the slope of the Kereves Deré. And it was here I first heard a whisper that the Collingwood Battalion had been obliterated as a ship is sunk with all hands. At four o'clock General Gouraud sent word that an attempt would be made to retake the Haricot. My companion looked graver and graver. Unless the French succeeded it would be necessary to order back the Manchester Brigade, which was half-way up to the top of Achi Baba, but alas, with its right flank exposed, for the Naval Division had been unable to advance and establish contact with these Lancashire Territorials owing to the failure of the French which had left another right flank exposed. Sir Ian Hamilton has been sneered at for claiming that we were within an ace of victory. Yet if a small entanglement of barbed wire on the left of our line had not escaped the ships' guns and if troops more reliable than the Senegalese had been on the right of it, Achi Baba would have fallen a few days later and the casualties of the Fourth of June would not have been a quarter of what they were.

Yes, it was Aspinall whom I had accompanied to Divisional Headquarters, for as I strain to recapture that afternoon fourteen years later the very expression on his face comes back to me as we emerged from the dug-outs to walk gloomily back along the paths winding among the tents

and cavities, paths that the Irishmen of the Dublins and Munsters had found time to decorate with carefully chosen white stones. Once more returned that sensation of being near the seaside and of all this noise of battle being but a dream.

The rifles and maxims had begun again when we reached the shelter. That second advance timed to begin at four o'clock was already in full swing. Again we tried to see the figures of men in their bayonet charges up the slope: and still there was nothing visible except the mules, and an ambulance waggon galloping up that ribbon of road. The sun was by now westering fast, and the shelter was lit up with a nimbus of pale gold.

The second advance had not achieved what was hoped for. The Manchester Brigade must be ordered to retire. A black depression fell: I stood aside for Sir Ian Hamilton to pass back along the trench. Then with one glance over my shoulder at that accursed hill of Achi Baba which still stood with hunched defiant shoulders between us and Constantinople, I followed the single file procession down the trench. Nobody spoke a word. Birds were twittering in their flight through the radiant air, and beyond them three biplanes went winging homeward to Tenedos, one behind the other, as birds fly across the sunset to roost. The sixty-pounder was still moaning on its way to the enemy's lines; but neither gunshot nor gloomy thoughts could quite destroy the amber peace of that evening of the Fourth of June.

It was when we were waiting near the pier that Guy Dawnay and I saw those wounded men of the Naval Division coming down tired and silent to the beach to embark in a lighter and go on board a hospital ship. And when, as I have already related, he told me to move along out of their way, because they would not want to be seeing us, I knew how bitterly he was thinking of those green and red and blue lines on the maps pegged down to those trestle-tables in the

shelter up there behind us. I think that we talked about Eton on the voyage back, and I seem to remember that Aspinall joined us in some quiet corner and that he and Dawnay looked at one another without speaking. Anyway, I know that when we stepped ashore on the soft beach of Kephalo I felt that a long century lay between the flushed twilight in which we came back and the grey morning when we started.

On Monday, the seventh of June, there was a chance of crossing again to Helles in a destroyer. I welcomed an excuse to escape from the stifling atmosphere of the I tent which had been full of blood-stained Turkish notebooks for the last two days, and asked leave to visit my Divisional Paymaster to discuss the problem of my pay and at the same time try for a batman. The atmosphere at Divisional Headquarters was gloomy in the extreme. I was not astonished when I heard details of what the Division had been through last Friday. The casualties had been very heavy. They thought that the French had let them down completely on the right. Patrick Shaw-Stewart was seen running along, waving his cane and shouting, 'Avancez! Avancez!' The Senegalese came out of their trenches, advanced seventeen yards, and then bolted back into them like so many gigantic black rabbits, after which nothing would persuade them to show themselves again. I suppose this was after the Colonial troops and Senegalese had been bombed out of the Haricot Redoubt which they had held for a time. There was no disposition to put any blame for the failure of the Fourth of June on the General Staff. Any gibing was mostly directed at Maxwell's *Peninsula Press* which had come out with a rosified account of our 'success,' though of course it was recognized that a daily sheet of unmitigated gloom would hardly be worth printing and circulating. I was promised a batman; but the problem of my pay looked like being for ever insoluble, and I started to

walk back. Small shells kept dropping all round me, and it seemed inevitable that I should be hit presently. There is no doubt that the sensation of being shelled when alone is most infernally unpleasant. After walking about three-quarters of a mile I felt inclined to sit down and cry with exasperation because those Turkish gunners would not realize that I really was not worth so much expensive ammunition. I wanted to argue with them personally about the futility of war. It seemed so maddeningly stupid that men should behave as impersonally and unreasonably as nature. Over to the right I saw a clump of trees and, feeling I simply must somehow get a sensation of cover, I hurried across toward them at a diagonal jog-trot. I could not have made a more foolish move, because apparently there was a well by them at which mules were watered, and at regular intervals the enemy used to spray the clump with shrapnel. I must have come in for one of those antiseptic douches, for the air was alive. I began to worry about the proofs of *Guy and Pauline*, thinking to myself that the printer's reader would be sure to change 'tralucent' to 'translucent' and that Secker in the depression caused by the news of my death would never remember how much importance I attached to getting rid of that unnecessary sibilant. Why couldn't those blasted Turks up on Achi Baba shut up? And I would have turned a gerund into a participle here and there . . . and probably there would be a vile *nominativus pendens* . . . at this moment I heard a burst of laughter and, looking round angrily, for I thought this laughter must be meant for the way I was definitely running by now, I saw a couple of men digging opposite to one another like the gravediggers in *Hamlet* and roaring with laughter every time one of the small shells either exploded or as often happened hit the ground with a thud and nothing else. Then one of the pair dropped. The other looked first at his pal and then at me who was

hurrying past with haversack, water-bottle, pistol, and glasses jogging up and down in a most undignified way.

"Beg pardon, sir! Beg pardon!" he called out.

"You can't do anything," I snapped. "You'd better get into cover yourself as quickly as you can."

"No, sir, it's not that," he whimpered as he cut across my path and forced me to stop while he saluted. "But would you mind telling me if my friend's dead, sir, because I'm new at this job."

"Of course, I'm not bloody well dead, you silly little cod," shouted the friend, who was sitting up by now and rubbing his head. And I left them, remembering another occasion when the friend actually had been killed and when the survivor's comment was, "Beg pardon, sir, you think it's funny at first, but it's very serious really."

By the time I reached the beach, the big gun on the Asiatic side of the Straits had started to shell the shipping. There were three preliminary fountains, after which a shell hit a French transport loaded with hay. The crew at once jumped overboard, and the transport caught fire. Then two destroyers rushed up and bundled all the men back on to their ship in order to extinguish the fire, which they succeeded in doing without being shelled any more.

I think it must have been that evening I met the last surviving officer of the Collingwood Battalion. He was very young, hardly more than eighteen and, after the horror of that experience to which he had gone almost within forty-eight hours of landing at Helles, he was being sent to do some work at Imbros in connection with the rest camp which was to be formed there. We did not talk about the battle, either then or at any other time. Oldfield was his name, and I hope he survived the battles in France later. I can hear now the tone of his voice as he said to me with a nervous little laugh:

"I'm the only officer left of the Collingwood."

## CHAPTER IX

### MORE LIFE AT G.H.Q.

ON the ninth of June George Brodrick*, who was A.D.C. to Sir Ian Hamilton, brought me the good news that a large package in brown paper of the most promising shape, covered with Egyptian stamps, and addressed to me was waiting in one of the Q tents.

"It must be your uniform at last," he said encouragingly.

We hurried over to the Q tent, and there sure enough was the parcel covered with Egyptian stamps. It was grabbed up, and my keenness to know what kind of a job Mr. Phillips had made of it led me to stop at George Brodrick's tent and cut the string. Appeared a service-jacket of almost as exquisite a shade of *eau de nil* as George Lloyd's; but when it was unfolded rapture was succeeded by dismay at the tailor's mistake in having affixed the red tabs of a Staff officer, to which of course I was not entitled, being merely attached to G.H.Q.

"I say, look what the ass has done!"

"Never mind," said George Brodrick, "we can soon rip them off."

It took us some time, however, before we managed with a pair of sand-blunted scissors to rip the tabs from a pair of jackets, for the thread was tough and the sewing was close. However, we managed at last to pluck the uniforms of their borrowed plumes, and divesting myself of that Tommy's jacket which had been fretting my vanity for nearly a month I donned the new arrival.

*Viscount Dunsford.

"It bags a bit behind," said Brodrick in those accents of carefully considered and sage gloom which were always so unanswerable.

"And it's about a couple of inches too big round the waist," I groaned. "What the deuce has the damn fellow been playing at? There isn't a tailor among the Guard, is there?" I asked hopefully, for the Guard consisted of West Surrey Yeomanry, of which George Brodrick was a Lieutenant.

"I doubt it," he said, shaking his head, for he would never surrender to an easy optimism.

All my peacock hopes vanished. I might have exclaimed with the wretched Moor:

> *Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war,*
> *Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone.*

I saw myself doomed for the rest of the campaign to pace the sandy cape of Kephalo with an accordion-pleated back, the mere anatomy of a Royal Marine. And then an idea struck me.

"I suppose these *are* my things?"

George Brodrick looked at the brown paper.

"My god," he exclaimed, "it's the wrong parcel! This is addressed to Colonel Beynon!"

The first emotion of relief faded rapidly in the murk of a new problem.

"I don't know where on earth he'll find anyone here to sew his tabs on again," Brodrick muttered hopelessly as he stooped to pick up from the sandy bottom of the tent those little scarlet tabs disfigured by loose ends of thread which belonged to the mutilated uniform of the Assistant-Adjutant-General.

At this moment Pollen put his head round the flap of the tent.

"Hullo! The new uniform at last?" he asked with quick and courteous sympathy.

"Well, not exactly, Pollen," I replied, and I think I must have given the kind of smile that is called sickly.

"We made a little mistake," George Brodrick put in. "There were several parcels in the Q tent, and as a matter of fact in a hurry we opened the wrong parcel. This is Colonel Beynon's uniform. I don't quite know what we'd better do about it."

"Why, you'd better take it round to his tent and explain the mistake," Pollen advised.

"Yes, but we've cut off his tabs," said Brodrick.

Even Pollen's urbanity was not proof against the shock of this announcement.

"Well, I wouldn't be in your shoes for something," he declared fervidly.

"Yes, I'm afraid he may be rather annoyed," I suggested in a vague hope that Pollen would laugh at such a preposterous notion.

"I should think he'll be absolutely furious," said Pollen with an accent as near to brutality as it was possible for that soft, somewhat ecclesiastical voice to achieve.

I am glad to take this opportunity of paying a tribute to George Brodrick's conspicuous gallantry by setting it on record that he actually volunteered to come with me to Colonel Beynon's tent and help me to explain how the mistake had occurred.

It was like a nightmare walking through the Lines with these violated uniforms over our arms, for everybody we passed greeted us with 'Hullo, the new uniform at last? How splendid!' And we had to call back cheerfully, 'yes, isn't it topping?'

Outside Colonel Beynon's tent we paused and looked at one another.

"I wonder if I could get Eddie Keeling to take them

back. He's had a diplomatic training and he has no reverence for . . ."

"Come on," Brodrick interrupted firmly, "we'd better get it over."

The Assistant-Adjutant-General was writing letters at a camp-table when we entered, and he gave that day one of the noblest exhibitions of self-restraint I have beheld. The only thing he could not quite manage was a smile.

"Shall I put the things down here, sir?" I asked with an exaggerated solicitude as if by laying them down gently enough on the camp-bed the wounded uniforms might recover.

"Anywhere," said the Colonel coldly.

I do not recall that to express our penitence we actually went out backward from the tent; but I am sure that we retired on tiptoe as one retires from an invalid's room, and I can still see the expression of Colonel Beynon's face and, deposited by George Brodrick in a neat little packet on his pillow, those outraged scarlet tabs. We found my own uniform in my tent and, except for the leather buttons which Mr. Phillips had supplied instead of the unobtainable buttons of my own Corps, it was perfect. The first person I met when I walked through the lines in my new splendour and spruceness was Kenny.

"By Jove, you're looking very smart. I hardly recognized you."

Kenny and I had had many a walk and talk together since we reached the *Arcadian* in that torpedo-boat; but, good friends though we were, that old service-jacket of mine and those imperfectly fitting breeches of Bedford-cord had always been a barrier to real intimacy. We were always as it were shouting to one another from the opposite banks of a river, discussing such topics as the way the fish were running or the prospects of a cloudy morning. But, first in my exquisite *eau de nil* uniform and then in an

even more exquisite uniform of *café au lait*, I crossed the severing stream and Kenny could really expand in a way that he had never been able to expand while I remained on the opposite bank. Some days after this a third or fourth British Warm arrived for Eddie Keeling, inside which I found the name of my own tailor in Grafton Street. It fitted me perfectly.

"You surely don't want another British Warm, Eddie?"

"Not in the least. I wish you'd take it off me."

"The simplest thing in the world! I'll write to Forster's and tell them to transfer it to my account."

It was a marvellous British Warm, as one would expect from a combination of Keeling's eye with Forster and Son's fingers. What sheep gave their wool for it we could not know, but they must have shunned as Virgil advised the *pabula laeta*, and they deserved a fifth book of Georgics to themselves. It looked as soft and luscious as a *mousse*, and the plump leather buttons might have tempted a child to eat them for *marrons glacés*.

*Munere sic niveo lanae, si credere dignum est,*
*Pan deus Arcadiae captam te, Luna, fefellit.*

My appearance in this vestment gave Kenny a pleasure that was really delightful to witness. He was like a man who had been trying to convince himself against his better judgment that a piece of furniture he rather liked was genuine and who had suddenly discovered that his taste had all along been more reliable than his expert judgment. I happened to inquire after the servant we had shared those first few days, and was distressed to hear that he had just been given Field Punishment for hitting another man on the head with a spade. I took the first opportunity to visit the culprit in his affliction and found him tied to a post in that hellish whirl of sand and flies and wind and blazing

sun. He was indignant over the punishment, which he said was unjust, because the other man had called him a bastard before he hit him on the head with a spade. If I had not acquired that new uniform I might have argued with Kenny about sending his servant back to the trenches when the punishment was over; but I had not the heart to shock Kenny by expressing opinions at variance with the lines a good tailor had laid down for me, and besides I had to admit to myself that his servant, apart from the accuracy and energy required to hit a man on the head with a spade, had always been careless and lazy. I salved my conscience, as so many consciences have been salved, with a farewell tip.

"Thank you, sir," said my first batman, before he set out philosophically for Helles, "I wouldn't have paid so much attention as what I did if he'd have called me anything else. But nobody likes a fellow to up and call him a bastard, do they, and which is why I hit him like I did."

The night after my uniform came from Alexandria there was a strange display of orange sheet lightning in the brooding firmament and a sudden silence of the frogs that seemed to presage a thunderstorm; but the omens ended in a tearing northerly gale which drove Keeling and myself out about three in the morning to tighten the ropes and hammer down the pegs of our tent. Either that chilly and laborious task, throughout which the Infant Jupiter muttered the most blood-curdling oaths, or the thin khaki in which I had been strutting about the day before brought on a chill which sent my temperature up to one hundred and three degrees. I felt as if cohorts of Turks were sticking knives into me while one particularly fierce and ingenious fellow raked the sciatic nerve with an iron hook. The worst of it was that the Gallipoli Gallop chose this moment to get me for the first time, and to gallop three hundred yards through the wind and sun with that temperature was not pleasant. However, luckily my new servant from the

Howe Battalion arrived, and supported by him and Eddie Keeling's man I toiled up and down that dusty slope all day without making myself any worse. Indeed, I was so much better in four days that the threat of a hospital-ship was mercifully averted, and on the fifth day I was back in the I tent working on that index of suspects. People were most kind to me while I was ill, coming to sit and chat in my tent instead of getting their afternoon walk. Thus all the gossip of the camp reached me, which was very tonic, for out there without any papers under a month old, and they not too plentiful, gossip was the breath of one's leisure. I fancy it was about this time that we secured a new cook for the OI Mess, and, if it was, it would have been exciting to hear the tale of his prowess from day to day. There had always been one faction that cried out for the importation of a cook from Malta, which used to make Maxwell, the Mess President, very angry, because he felt it was a criticism of the two local cooks he had already engaged. I have an idea that a Maltese cook did finally arrive ; but if he did he was no better than any of the others, and the food remained filthy all the time. I remember finding one cook at work behind a shelter of old privy-seats he had built round his field-oven to keep off the wind. I can see him now grinning at us through the hole in one of them, like a driver in the cab of a railway-engine. Some of the members of the Mess were shocked by the notion of such a kitchen and protested to Maxwell, who talked darkly of finding somebody else to run the Mess, for the trouble of doing which he got no gratitude from anybody. The people in OI, Q, and A were convinced that the other two Messes were better than theirs ; but I fancy that they were all much of a bad muchness, and though Maxwell was more pompous over the food he provided it was no worse than the rest.

Tea was the most squalid meal, because at tea the flies

reached their maximum of numbers and offensiveness. One was lucky to get a sip that only included a couple of flies, and for those who did not like sugar in their tea the foul sweetness of biting a fly was not enjoyable. At this hour the sun had moved round far enough to shine in through the opening of the big marquee where we messed, and the beams lit up the stains and spills on the long trestle-table, every one of which was the centre of attraction for a quarrelsome mob of these flies which merely used our table for a light dessert after the solid filth they had been gorging all day. They used to alight in threes and fours at a time on one's lips and sometimes had to be actually pulled away, so greedy were they of the moisture ; they were loathsome, too, when they clung sizzling to the rim of one's cup. Fortunately these foul Harpies slept at night, and every evening when dinner was over Val Braithwaite and I used to make torches of old newspapers and burn slowly and voluptuously up the tent-ropes which looked like cords of deep indigo velvet, so thickly on them slept the flies. Unfortunately we could not reach the roof, which was a dark solid canopy of them. One night we tied our torch to a long pole ; but the effect of wingless flies falling down to crawl about on our heads and get netted in our hair was too much for us, and after that we only burnt them on the ropes.

For some time after we went ashore we had no bread, and it was worth while learning by experience how detestable a meal can be without bread, for which biscuit is no sort of substitute. Yet after a couple of meals accompanied by bread the novelty wore off, and we were once again gazing distastefully at our plates. And then somebody who knew what he was talking about said that *Yorghti* was what we should be having every night. *Yorghti* is sour sheep's milk served in a bowl like junket, and the man who invented it should have as much respect as humanity has

accorded to Prometheus. It may be discovered one day that Prometheus did invent it, and no doubt the gods were too much taken up with their own ambrosia to be jealous. *Yorghti!* And as I write the name of that substance I fain would sing with golden eloquence, I am conscious, remorsefully conscious, that I am probably not spelling it as it should be spelt. Somewhere on my shelves the orthography of that word must be hidden, but I cannot find it; and what does it matter? *Yorghti*, whatever way it may be spelt, is a ridiculous name for this life-giving stuff. At first, in the approved English fashion, the uninitiated members of the Mess turned up their noses at it. No doubt several sand-dried Israelites made an equivalent grimace of contempt over the first plate of manna put before them. Presently, however, everybody overcame his insular prejudice first against milking sheep at all and then against the deliberate turning of such unnatural milk sour, overcame his prejudice indeed so successfully that we at the junior end of the table began to look a little anxious as the bowl dallied unduly in the hands of our seniors. There was one older member of the Mess whose eyes used to glow like a lover's with real passion when the bowl reached him. This particular member was something of a puritan. I had often heard him speak in terms of unmeasured reprobation of men who had been willing to sacrifice their careers for women or wine or cards, and I was maliciously quick to note his own carnal weakness and point it out to others. Val Braithwaite and I used to bet with each other on the number of spoonfuls he would scoop on to his plate when the *yorghti* reached him; and once when X—— helped himself to nine generous spoonfuls, his eyes goggling in the candlelight, we derived so much enjoyment from the spectacle that we hardly minded having to scrape the bowl to find ourselves a meagre spoonful apiece. The whole case of X—— and his greed over food interested me, because apart from that he was

obviously a man of singularly ascetic habits, and his puritanism if betraying a little too much spiritual pride was unmistakably sincere and due to a real hatred of fleshly indulgence. Yet one might have fancied that he for a bowl of *yorghti* would have lapped away kingdoms and provinces even as once upon a time for Cleopatra Antony kissed them away.

By the middle of June the flowers had mostly faded from the dunes of Kephalo. The pink oleanders still bloomed in the damp hollows, the topmost blossoms of the pink hollyhocks were still opening; but of all those myriad many-coloured stars among the herbage none now remained except a little St. John's wort with grey leaves. There was indeed one more floral excitement, which was when Orlo Williams discovered a bosket of *Vitex agnus castus*, that shrub whose sacred twigs the Vestal Virgins carried. The flowers are like small verbenas of every pastel shade of fawn and mauve and cloudy pink. Monk's Pepper it is sometimes called, for its fruits, spiced though they be, are a powerful opponent of Aphrodite as becomes a shrub beneath whose scanty shade Hera was born.

To compensate for the diminution of the Flora, insect life increased in multitude and variety every day. There were flies, blue-bottles, green-bottles, a big grey-striped cleg of most undaunted pertinacity and savagery, scorpions, ticks, grasshoppers of every size and shape, some with wings that glittered in the sun like garnets, some that sparkled like mica or lapis lazuli. There were spiders, beetles, ants, mosquitoes, sand-flies, digger-wasps, praying-mantises, and those ghastly centipedes which moved slowly like a toy clockwork train, some of them six inches long and half an inch wide. There was one large spider which we used to call a tarantula, but which belonged, I fancy, to another branch of the Lycosa family. This brute was a couple of inches long with a soft and loathsome puce-coloured body

hairless or seemingly hairless. We tried several contests between these spiders and the clockwork centipedes under inverted tumblers; but such prize-fights were usually a failure, because the centipede continued to promenade round and round with that curiously cold and cynical expression which all centipedes affect, while the spider became either hysterical or sulky.

Far better sport was provided by the ant-lion. This is quite the most entertaining larva I have had the luck to meet. I cannot find out much about the habits of the perfect insect, which is a kind of nocturnal dragon-fly believed to be carnivorous. If *Myrmeleon formicarius* is half as artful as its earlier wingless self it must be a nasty customer for a tipsy moth to meet on the way home. In appearance the larva somewhat resembles a much flattened, slightly triangular, greyish woodlouse with a flat square head from which project a couple of grim incurving mandibles. This clumsy-looking creature, which on hard ground can only walk very slowly backward, excavates for itself a conical pit in sand, about two inches deep and three inches wide at the top. First of all, it marks out a circular furrow, and then, working round the inside of this boundary, it shovels sand with a foreleg on to its square head, which in turn flings the sand outside the furrow. In order not to overtire one leg it traces every alternate furrow in an opposite direction so as to use the right and left foreleg in turn. If it finds a small stone, this is placed on its head and jerked over the side. Sometimes, however, when the ant-lion gets near the bottom of the narrowing pit, it finds a stone too big to be jerked out. This stone is somehow lifted on to its back and there kept balanced by moving the segments of which it is composed, rather in the way that a juggler like Cinquevalli will balance a cannon-ball on his shoulder by the play of the muscles. Time after time I have seen the persevering ant-lion get a stone almost to the top, only for it to roll off at the

last moment; but the miniature Sisyphus goes back for it undaunted and to achieve its purpose cleverly makes use of the tiny groove which the stone had cut in falling. I watched one ant-lion do this eight times before it succeeded in unloading the stone over the brow of the pit. When all is finished the ant-lion returns to the bottom and buries itself in the sand, except for the points of the open forceps made by its mandibles. Then the fun begins. An inquisitive ant walking along decides to explore the pit. The moment it steps over the edge the ant-lion down at the bottom starts throwing sand over it or else if more effective shovels the sand away from underneath the ant, which gradually slides down the fatal precipice until it is seized, sucked partially dry, and flicked outside. The ugly little epicure would not accept dead flies or ants and ejected them with contempt when offered to it. Then I tried pushing one of those large soldier-ants over the side. This time the ant-lion got more than it counted on, for the soldier-ant with an expression of contemptuous indignation turned round sharply and bit one of the mandibles with such ferocity that the ant-lion left soldier-ants alone after that, though I kept flicking them down into the pit for the whole of a sunny half-hour. Two years later, on the island of Samos, I tried the experiment of putting an ant-lion down outside the entrance to a colony of small black ants, its easy victims when alone. The ground was too hard for the ant-lion to dig itself in, though a gallant effort was made; and then began a great battle which did not end in the death of the ant-lion and the triumphant dragging of the carcass within until it had left twenty-six devoted ants lying dead round their threshold. Feeding the ant-lions became a recognized pastime during our walks at Kephalo. The absence of golf and bridge turned many people into observers of nature, and it became clear that an Englishman's mind need not necessarily become a desert when he

has no ball to knock about. It certainly was an unusual and enjoyable experience to spend all those weeks in masculine society without once finding a good conversation butchered to make a bridge-player's holiday.

The arrival of the proofs of *Guy and Pauline* provided some amusement, and if ever a book of mine deserved to escape the reproach of a single misprint that one did. Intruding commas were dealt with as ruthlessly as the flies; there was not an epithet that did not face the verdict of a dozen critical if always kindly commentators before it was allowed to remain. I remember Val Braithwaite's being much concerned to find Guy addressing Pauline as 'my burning rose', which he found exaggerated. He spoke to Guy Dawnay about it and suggested that he should tactfully propose the elimination of this apostrophe. We had a long discussion over it, in which, while I admitted that Val himself would never be likely to address a young woman so floridly, I held fast to my opinion that Guy would.

"Not Guy Dawnay?" Val exclaimed in horror.

"No, no, not Guy Dawnay, of course. But this fellow I'm writing about is supposed to be half off his head with love."

"My god, I should think he was," Val agreed warmly. "Of course, I don't know anything about writing or that sort of thing, but 'my burning rose' . . . well, I think it sounds idiotic. You mustn't be offended, old thing. But suppose I suddenly sang out to a girl 'my burning rose'? Damn it, she'd think I was blotto. I mean to say, making allowances for this chap Guy and all that, I think 'my burning rose' is going a bit too far."

"Yes, but he wasn't at Winchester, Val."

"Where was he?"

"I think he was at Westminster and Balliol."

"Well, of course, you know best, I suppose. But if I'd

written this book I should take out all this about 'my burning rose'. I mean to say, as soon as I read he said that, it prejudiced me against him. Well, look here, did you ever call a girl a burning rose ? "

" No, I don't suppose I ever did."

" There you are ! "

" Yes, but the point is that Guy and Pauline are walking about in a crimson sunset."

" Well, what of it ? That's no excuse for this chap making an ass of himself like that."

" Wait a minute. If I were very much in love with a girl and I saw her cheeks flushed and I was trying to express some of the . . ."

But Val shook his head gravely.

" I don't think you'd call her a burning rose."

The tide ran strongly against 'my burning rose' for a while at G.H.Q. : but I won Aspinall over to my side, and in the end the expression was allowed to pass as just admissible in the circumstances with a strong recommendation that Guy must never say such a thing again. Possibly Powell's* opinion was asked about the behaviour of poets, because his sister had married one of the most distinguished poets of the day in Laurence Binyon. Powell admitted that it had been a great shock to the family when they heard his sister was going to marry a poet. I daresay my dear old father-in-law E. D. Stone, who was a friend of hers, had had some of the blame at first for putting ideas into her head by encouraging her to suppose that she was clever, which would make a girl look at poets from another angle.

" We were awfully relieved," said Powell with a reminiscent sigh, " when we found out that he was quite an ordinary chap."

" But surely an extraordinary poet, Powell ? "

* Col. E. B. Powell, D.S.O.

"Yes, I know. That's what we were afraid of until we met him. By Jove," the Rifleman declared, twirling his dark moustache with a gesture which recalled that outlived perplexity. "By Jove, what a relief it was when we saw him! We simply hadn't known *what* to imagine beforehand."

So I fancy that if Powell's opinion was ever asked about calling young women burning roses he would, whatever the colour of the sunset, have condemned it as unequivocally as Val Braithwaite had.

It was to Powell that I owe one of those flashes that illuminate essentiality. Walking with him one night in conversation up and down the lines, he turned to me and said abruptly:

"This is exactly like South Africa."

And by that single remark he revealed to me the South African War and gave me at the same time the clue to this campaign. He had a deceptive slowness of comment, a heaviness it would have seemed to many, which concealed a ripe dry wit. A walk with Powell was like a glass of excellent old dry sherry, to be sipped deliberately with relish.

In the middle of correcting the proofs of *Guy and Pauline* somebody suggested that the least return I could make for the trouble the General Staff had taken over my punctuation was to dedicate the book to them. I went to Sir Ian Hamilton, feeling a little nervous beforehand about the way he might receive this proposal, and asked his leave to inscribe the book to him and the General Staff of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force. He accepted the dedication in the kindest way and contrived to make me fancy, whatever were his own vexed thoughts at that time of endless anxiety, that the suggestion pleased him. So what Orlo Williams called that 'luscious pastoral' went back for press inscribed with all sincerity to a number of

people to whom I felt a deep gratitude and for whom I had a real affection.*

Just about the time I was sending off the corrected proofs of *Guy and Pauline* Henry James wrote me the following letter :

21 Carlyle Mansions,
Cheyne Walk, S.W.
*June* 18*th*, 1915.

*My dear Monty :*

*All this while I have remained shamefully in your debt for interesting news, and I am plunged deeper into that condition by your admirable report from the Dardanelles in this a.m.'s Times. I am a backward being, alas, in these days when so much is forward ; our public anxieties somehow strike for me at the roots of letter-writing, and I remain too often dumb, not because I am not thinking and feeling a thousand things, but exactly because I am doing so to such intensity. You wrote me weeks ago that you had finished your new novel—which information took my breath away (I mean by its windlike rush)—and now has come thus much of the remainder of the adventure for which that so grandly liberated you and which I follow with the liveliest participation in all your splendid sense of it and profit of it. I confess I take an enormous pleasure in the fact of the exposure of the sensitive plate in your imagination, your tremendous attention, to all these wonderful and terrible things. What impressions you are getting, verily—and what a breach must it all not make with the course of history you are practising up to the very eve. I rejoice that you finished and snipped off, or tucked in and wound up, something self-contained there—for how could you*

*Mr. John Freeman, in a carnivorous study of my work written at a time when the *London Mercury* was trying without success to keep post-war poets alive by feeding them on the reputations of novelists, found this dedication conspicuous, which shows that poets may preserve an even vaguer conception of what soldiers are than the conception soldiers often used to have of poets.

*ever go back to it if you hadn't?—under that violence of rupture with the past which makes me ask myself what will have become of all that material we were taking for granted, and which now lies there behind us like some vast damaged cargo dumped upon a dock and unfit for human purchase or consumption. I seem to fear that I shall find myself seeing your recently concluded novel as through a glass darkly—which, however, will not prevent my immediately falling upon it when it appears; as I assume, however, that it is not now likely to do before the summer's end—by which time God knows what other monstrous chapters of history won't have been perpetrated! What I most want to say to you, I think, is that I rejoice for you with all my heart in that assurance of health which has enabled you to gird yourself and go forth. If the torrid south has always been good for you there must be no amount of it that you are now not getting—though I am naturally reduced, you see, to quite abjectly helpless and incompetent supposition. I hang about you at any rate with all sorts of vows and benedictions. I feel that I mustn't make remarks about the colossal undertaking you are engaged in beyond saying that I believe with all my heart in the final power of your push. As for our news here the gist of that is that we are living with our eyes on you and more and more materially backing you. My comment on you is feeble, but my faith absolute, and I am, my dear Monty, your more than ever faithful old*

*Henry James.*

*P.S. I have your address, of many integuments, from your mother, but feel rather that my mountain of envelopes should give birth to a livelier mouse!* *

At this date I thought Henry James was over-estimating the ruin that the war was likely to make of 'all that material we were taking for granted.' I was still supposing that I should emerge from it presently with a useful little hoard of experience, on which I should draw when a suitable

* Printed by permission of the Trustees of the Estate of the late Henry James.

occasion for expenditure presented itself. I did not know then with what intensity I was going to live for the next two years, nor that, having lived more richly than I could ever hope to write, writing would come more and more to seem sometimes an almost intolerable interruption of living. I look along my shelf at the eighteen books I have written during the last eleven years ; and then, turning to the five books written before I took an active part in the war, I ask myself in amazement how I once imagined that from the spendthrift existence of war I should put one farthing worth of experience into the bank. For years now I have been pursuing that elusive phantom of the great war novel, and this first volume of my memories marks a complete surrender to the overwhelming fact, or, if you will a meek acceptance of Byron's statement, that truth is stranger than fiction. To have taken that society on the promontory of Kephalo and extracted from it the juice to feed my own imaginary creations came finally to seem quite unjustifiable. If the ultimate effect of this volume should have no more value than an album of faded snapshots I am content. Somehow the solid fact of Achi Baba stands as doggedly between me and my dreams of a great war novel as it stood between us and our dreams of Constantinople.

Neither my dreams nor those of the General Staff were yet dispelled that June. The silence of the Government over three weeks was abruptly broken. Three new Divisions would soon be on their way. At G.H.Q. we heard of two horses and a groom for every member of the Staff. I confess that the prospect of having to ride onward in the wake of a victorious army filled me with alarm. It is not that I cannot sit on a horse, but that I do not understand them. Their language is to me incommunicable. When a dog growls, I know what it wants. No dog would get its way with me by just growling in the hope that I should be put off by a menacing noise, because I should back myself to

know how far it was prepared to follow up speech by action. But, when a horse puts down its head and makes a noise through its admired nostrils like a railway-engine in a station, I have not the least idea whether it is asking for a handful of oats or signifying its intention of galloping off with me in exactly the opposite direction from my destination.

The mere fact that the Greeks call the horse ὁ ἄλογος or 'the unreasonable one' revives in me the Philhellene more potently than Byron's most impassioned verse.

"What makes him go sideways?" said Mr. Snodgrass in the bin, to Mr. Winkle in the saddle.

"I can't imagine," replied Mr. Winkle.

And no answer ever given by a character in literature has struck quite such a sympathetic chord in my innermost being.

As soon as I heard of these horses waiting to bear me to Constantinople I had a vision of myself lolloping along sideways on them all the way from Helles to the Golden Horn. They would probably both be chestnuts with all that temperamental inclination to go off at a tangent about nothing which they share with red-haired human beings.

"Can you ride?" I inquired of my new batman, whom I will call Darwin.

"No, sir."

"Well, you'd better learn," I said severely.

I was determined that somebody else should feel as much worried by the prospect of dealing with those horses as I was.

Darwin was a grave youth who in real life was a clerk in a Municipality somewhere along the South Coast. He made no secret of his pleasure at being out of the trenches where with the Howe he had been in the very thick of things. But he would have been still better pleased to be out of the war altogether. One day I found him sitting on my camp-chair,

his hands on his knees, and a remote, wistful look in his dark eyes.

"Hullo, Darwin, dreaming?" I asked.

He rose with an apology.

"I was just thinking it was on the stroke of two, sir. And I was just thinking that if I was at home, sir, I'd just be about half-way up the stairs to the Office. There are sixty-four steps, sir, up to the Municipal Assessment Offices, and I was just thinking I'd have been on the thirty-second step where I always stopped to have a look back at the clock on the Esplanade and see I wasn't late. There was a window just where the thirty-second step was, and after that you turned the corner and went on up."

"And you'll be glad to be walking up those stairs again, Darwin?"

"Oh, I shall be glad, sir," he declared with a sigh. Not glen nor ben could have called more poignantly to the heart of a Gael than the steps up to the Municipal Assessment Offices in a South-coast town called to Darwin; Jacob's Ladder was not thronged by a brighter multitude of angels.

"You don't feel that this experience of war will make you disinclined to settle down when it's over?"

"No, sir, the only thing I really think about *is* settling down again."

"And you really enjoy office work?"

"Oh, I do, sir. I'm really what you might call passionately fond of it. Well, it's always just about the same, and I think that's what makes it so enjoyable."

Soon after this Darwin brought some letters he had been writing home for me to censor.

"Long letters, Darwin," I commented, glancing with some dismay at the closely-written sheets I should have to wade through, if I did my work honestly.

"I think, sir, if you read through one of them, it will be

quite sufficient. The others are all word for word the same. Just the names different at the beginning, that's all."

And sure enough the five long letters addressed as far as I can remember to a father, three brothers, and a sister all living in the same house were word for word the same except for such abbreviated names as Hube and Herb at the beginning.

"Are you going to send them all in one envelope?"

"No, sir," he replied with that gentle deprecatory expression of his. "Well, that would hardly be quite the same thing, would it? Though we're a very united family."

I stamped the envelopes with the censor's scarlet seal, wondering if these letters would be passed round the little sitting-room in that neat terrace somewhere on the South Coast and be read, each one in turn, as solemnly as they had been written.

Darwin remained with me as long as I remained a member of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force. A quiet, grave, dreamy youth, he would sit forward in the trawler we were voyaging in at the moment and gaze for hours at the horizon as if to conjure along it amid those classic scenes the prosperous esplanade of his native town. How different from the sober study in sepia-wash that might have illustrated Darwin's life was the crude and gaudy colouring of the little biographies I was compiling for the index of suspects in the Area of Operations.

'*Captain*' *H—— H——* . . . I wish I could print his name in full, for it had the authentic tang of robust villainy and in the annals of piracy could have stood beside such names as Captain Want or Captain Yellows, Captain Fly or Captain Crackers.

'*Captain*' *H—— H——. Left Birmingham in* 18—— *where he was employed as a clerk at Messrs.* ——, *brass-founders. Suspected of I.D.B. in the Transvaal. Expelled from Pretoria. Smuggled ivory from Abyssinia. Arrested*

*for an unnatural offence at Durban. Involved in several frauds in the U.K. Served sentence of three years' penal servitude. Served sentence in Queensland for stealing opals. Expelled from Tripoli by Italians during Turko-Italian war for suspected espionage. Ran a Seamen's Rest-House in Smyrna. Arrived in Anzac as Interpreter. Arrested and sent to Malta for the remainder of the war.*

Not every suspect arrested in the Area of Operations had had quite such a twopence-coloured career as Captain H—— H——. There were many wearisome files to toil through where only enough evidence had been gathered to write at the end of the suspect's record *Excluded from the A. of O.* with the date. Later on when I was in Athens many of these merely tainted names came under observation for the second time, and in almost every case I satisfied myself that the suspicious conduct had been due to their owners' attempts to carry through trading deals and that the denunciation of them to the military authorities had been the work of a jealous rival. Spy fever was endemic on the Peninsula, and seldom a day passed without an excitable Brigadier's telephoning that he had caught some ruffian red-handed, the ruffian always turning out on investigation either to be a Greek cook who had wandered from a Brigade near by, or an interpreter with a long and honourable career of service behind him. Few nights went by that were not enlivened by the most circumstantial reports of signalling, all of which proved susceptible of a common-sense explanation.

Ultimately I should come to consider that the careers of suspects were as much lacking in variety as the career of the clerk who was looking after me ; but the glamour of Intelligence work long outlasted the time I spent at G.H.Q., and these files from which I was now compiling a coherent index were as stimulating to the fancy as plans of buried treasure.

Breakfast in bed at seven. Up at half-past seven. Work from eight till half-past twelve. A siesta or a gossip or a walk in the afternoon. Tea at four. Work from five till half-past seven. Sometimes a walk at half-past six. Dinner at eight. Work from nine till ten or half-past, and then bed. That was the time-table; and my suspect list was almost in order when Sir Ian Hamilton sent for me on the evening of the eighteenth of June and told me that he wished me to go back with General Hunter-Weston* who had invited me to be his guest at Army Corps Headquarters on the Peninsula. Sir Ian was anxious for me to get round a bit in case I should be called upon to act as Official Eye-witness.

From the moment that General Hunter-Weston turned his hawk's countenance on me and said to the accompaniment of his own humming:

"So you're coming back with us for a blow at Helles! Splendid! Capital! You'll enjoy yourself. Tra-la-tra-lira-lira-la!" I knew I was in for a good time.

*Lt.-General Sir Aylmer Hunter-Weston, K.C.B., D.S.O, M.P.

## CHAPTER X

### ARMY CORPS HEADQUARTERS

THE enemy had celebrated the centenary of the Battle of Waterloo by driving the Hundred and Twenty-fifth Brigade out of the salient they had captured on the Fourth of June. The Brigade was unable to recover it; but the Fifth Royal Scots with one company of the Fourth Worcesters had come to its help led by Lt.-Colonel J. T. R. Wilson, who was reputed to be in real life a Writer to the Signet in Edinburgh. The battalion of Edinburgh territorials he commanded had been brigaded with the Fourth Worcesters, the Second Hampshires, and the First Essex to take the place of a missing battalion and complete the Eighty-eighth Brigade of the immortal Twenty-ninth Division. The Royal Scots had already proved their metal on several occasions, and now General Hunter-Weston was bubbling over to get back to Helles and find out the details of this latest gallant action of theirs, which had happened while he was celebrating the centenary of Waterloo with Sir Ian Hamilton over a dish of crayfish. He was bubbling with so much energy and enthusiasm that I expected him every minute to bubble right overboard from the destroyer and aerate the whole Ægean.

We reached Lancashire Landing at the close of a hot bombardment with high explosive shells from Asia, and walked along to Army Corps Headquarters which were next door to the aerodrome. Here we were met by the General's A.D.C., Captain Carter of the King's Own York-

shire Light Infantry, such a plump and genial figure as one might invent to steer a fairy tale to a happy ending.

"Eighty-seven big ones, sir, in thirty-five minutes," said Carter, with a grave salute and a twinkle in his eyes.

"Any damage?"

"Killed one man, sir." The twinkle vanished. "And slightly damaged one biplane." The twinkle returned.

The General gazed at the ploughed-up earth round his Headquarters.

"Wasteful rascals! Wasteful rascals!" he ejaculated, and then went off, humming gaily, to look at the Baronial Hall, which was his name for the new dug-out finished that very morning and designed to shelter his Mess when a bombardment became too fierce even for him to sit talking at the top of his voice or singing to himself in the Mess-tent.

"Well, isn't this great and noble!" he declared. "You've nothing like this on Imbros, Mackenzie. Look at that magnificent old carved oak ceiling," he went on, pointing to the rough pine trunks which supported the roof.

"Shall we have tea in here, sir?" Carter asked with a note of pride in his voice.

"Tea in here? Good god, no! Why, it's a perfectly superb afternoon. We don't want to sit stuffing in here. The flowers that bloom in the spring, tra-la! The flowers that bloom tra-la, tra-la, tra-la!"

Humming and singing he led the way to the Mess-tent, which was open on one side with an awning in front like a veranda, as I seem to remember, and a glorious view of the towering coast of Asia away to the left, and on the right islands like great blue birds floating on the sparkling sea.

"You haven't got a better view than this in Italy, Mackenzie."

"No, sir."

After tea I sat on in the Mess-tent with Major Plunket who had just arrived to join General Hunter-Weston's

Staff, but who had unluckily been thrown from his horse when riding up to the fire-trenches and broken his collar-bone. 'Plunks' was a most lovable sandy-haired man who had been Military Attaché to the British Legations in Greece and Serbia when war broke out. At Belgrade he had been standing on the heights above the Danube watching some action between the Austrians and Serbians and had just turned round to go home when a bullet got him in what is not considered the most dignified place to receive a bullet; and now within twenty-four hours of arriving here to take up his new post the fortune of war had played him another trick.

He and I had not been chatting very long when shells began to fall again. Presently one of them burst about ten yards from Plunket's chair. On this he rose and declared that sitting here was not good enough, which I had been thinking for the last five minutes. Poor 'Plunks' with his broken collar-bone was none too nippy in his movements and, since he was also still a bit vague about the topography of the Headquarters camp, we had about a dozen more shells round us before we finally went to earth. The shelling stopped just before eight, much to the General's relief, for he enjoyed his dinner in the sunset. And a very good dinner it was. I would not take my oath that we did not have champagne, though my recollection of the brilliant sunset and the General's equally brilliant conversation may be responsible for thinking that there was champagne as well. It would be unfair after fourteen years to try to reproduce that talk, which was a most lucid exposition of the theory of war and gave an insight into the mind of the good soldier such as I had never had before.

Some time after this General Paris visited Army Corps Headquarters, and to him General Hunter-Weston spoke enthusiastically of some successful action on a portion of the front.

"Many casualties?" asked General Paris in a voice that could not hide the bitterness he felt over the losses of his own splendid Division. And as I think of General Hunter-Weston's reply I fancy I see a falcon strike angrily at some grizzled trusty old dog.

"Casualties?" he cried, eyes flashing, aquiline nose quivering. "What do I care for casualties?"

The other rose from his chair.

"I must be getting back," he growled.

"You'll stay to tea?"

"No, thanks."

And as that burly florid man went slowly out, who might not have felt that there was between him and General Hunter-Weston as wide a chasm in nature as if he were a dog indeed and the other a falcon?

Now, it would be easy to deduce from this brief exchange of words that General Hunter-Weston was a mere butcher, and there is no doubt that, because he never did hesitate to talk in this ruthless strain, he did achieve such a reputation on the Peninsula. Actually no man I have met brimmed over more richly with human sympathy. He was a logician of war, and as a logician he believed and was always ready to contend in open debate that, provided the objective was gained, casualties were of no importance. Did a more compassionate spirit animate the conduct of the war on the Western Front?

At Gallipoli the casualties of the Royal Naval Division commanded by General Paris were 332 officers and 7,198 other ranks killed and wounded. On the Western Front afterwards their casualties were 1,603 officers and 32,242 other ranks killed and wounded. Their total casualties throughout the war were over six times as heavy as they were at Gallipoli. It is true that they did not gain their objective at Gallipoli; but it would be equally true to claim that they never gained their objective on the Western

Front, for unless America had come in on our side we should never have beaten the Germans in the West. At the time of the Dardanelles Campaign the entry of America was a far less likely contingency than the entry of Greece, Roumania, and Bulgaria on our side, and that quite soon, could we but demonstrate that we really were determined to take Constantinople. There is no doubt that, with more guns or even with more ammunition for the guns we had, we should have swept up the Peninsula, and there is equally no doubt that, if we had achieved such a sweeping advance, the war could have been and probably would have been over by the end of 1915. Fortune turns those she would ruin into fools first. We remember the ruin, but we are apt to forget that preliminary folly. The more Admirals and Generals that try to answer the indictment of them which Mr. Churchill's volumes provide, the more completely unanswerable those volumes remain. Nearly every one of those whom posterity will blame for the failure of the Dardanelles Expedition is now dead. Those whom their contemporaries of fourteen years ago blamed are nearly all still alive. Slowly opinion has veered round, and to the value of that Expedition which was sometime a paradox time has given proof.

General Hunter-Weston was one of those who grasped how profoundly success at Gallipoli would influence the course of the war. If he had been ordered by Sir Ian Hamilton to ride forward alone against Achi Baba he would have jumped on his horse and done so, humming and singing to himself while he rode up that defiant slope. As a military logician he would have recognized that the capture of Achi Baba with only himself as a casualty would have been indeed a famous victory. When he pounced like a hawk on General Paris's grizzled head that hot afternoon, screaming, 'What do I care for casualties?' he spoke from conviction; and I look back with regard to a man who was not prepared

to sacrifice the logic I had heard him so brilliantly and so persuasively demonstrate while the last crimson glow of the sunset was fading into a deep velvety night. I can still see his bright eyes flashing in the candlelight where at the head of the table in his Mess-tent he holds forth with such irrefragable logic on the conduct of war.

That night Plunket had offered me the hospitality of his tent. The Staff of the Eighth Army Corps had compromised so far with those Asiatic guns as to have had scraped out for themselves in the corners of their tents shallow excavations hardly as big as a generous grave, in which they slept. Plunket was worried that there was only one excavation and it much too narrow to share with me even had his collar-bone been whole. He did not at all like the notion of my bed's being fully exposed, but consoled himself with the thought that I could always get up and go to the General's dug-out if the shelling became too unpleasant. It was about half-past ten when I tucked in my host and got into bed myself. For ten minutes I read Hilaire Belloc on the military position in an old copy of *Land and Water* stippled all over with dead flies. Then I blew out the candle in the lantern and fell into a sound sleep, from which I was wakened by a terrific crash that seemed to be reverberating on and on through the thick black silence, though indeed the reverberation was my own thudding heart. I struck a match and lit the lantern just as Plunket in his pyjamas raised himself anxiously and painfully. It was exactly half-past eleven.

"They've started again. You'd better hurry along and find the General's dug-out," he told me.

I got out of bed and stood for a minute in the entrance of the tent. The moon, then in her first quarter, had already set. Not a star was visible. The blackness was absolute, and as I looked out it seemed to push its way past me into our tent, which was the only one that showed a

light. The silence was as deep as the darkness. It was all very well for Plunket to tell me to go and find the General's dug-out; but I should not make myself popular by wandering round the camp and tripping over other people's tent-ropes in this blackness. And, even were I successful in reaching the General's dug-out, I could not fancy myself waking him up and explaining that I had come to him for protection. I turned back into the tent, blew out the light, and retired to bed again.

"What on earth are you doing?" Plunket complained fretfully from his pit.

"Well, I think I'd rather stay here. There probably won't be another."

"Don't be such an ass. It isn't being brave to make an ass of yourself."

"I'm not being brave. But I'd really rather stay here."

I shirked trying to explain to Plunket that I felt more nervous at the prospect of waking up the whole camp by setting out in the dark to look for the General's dug-out than I should be if I remained where I was. To arrive here as a guest from G.H.Q. and at the first sound of a shell to go careering round the camp for shelter appeared to me as a monstrous breach of good manners, and the longer I contemplated it, the worse it appeared. Plunket grumbled on at me for a while; but I pretended to be asleep. The next explosion came at midnight, for I struck a match quickly to note the time.

"Go and get into cover, Mackenzie."

"It's all right. I don't expect there'll be another. I don't think that one was quite so near as the first."

"My god," poor Plunket groaned, "if I could use my arm I'd get up and push you out of the tent."

The third crash came at half-past twelve, and having by now decided that these cursed shells would arrive every half-hour, I made up my mind to sleep. In this I was

mercifully successful, and I only heard the rest of the half-hourly explosions as all through the night one hears from a Pullman car the train stop at one station after another through the night's journey. I was so eager to justify myself for feeling so ridiculously self-conscious about waking up the General or tripping over tent-ropes on my way to find him that I compelled sleep to come to the rescue of my vanity. I knew that I was worrying poor Plunket by my obstinacy, because I could vaguely hear his voice sounding attenuated as a ghost's when it floated toward me across a gulf of utter darkness and querulously kept urging me to get under cover. I felt ashamed of myself for adding to the worry of his rotten night when he was already in such pain from his shoulder; but I just lacked the courage to commit what might be thought a breach of etiquette. This moral cowardice of mine has always seemed to me a capital example of the effect of an English public-school education, which provides its victim with the necessary physical courage either to sit down on a football under the feet of eight ferocious muddy forwards or to sleep on a camp-bed with nothing except a piece of canvas between him and the chance of being blown to nothing by a shell punctually at one of the hours or half-hours of a mercifully short June night, but which at the same time leaves him such a moral coward as to be afraid to fasten the bottom button of his waistcoat or to wake up his host at midnight and ask leave to put his bed where it will be safe from the terrifying shells of an eight-inch gun.

No sooner had that too energetic gunner in Asia turned in for a morning doze than the flies became lively, and I hope the fellow had as little chance of sleeping with them as I had, for Darwin had worked out in his head somehow that I should not want my mosquito-net on the Peninsula and so had left it behind at Imbros. I got up and strolled about the aerodrome in pyjamas, drinking deep of the wine-gold

morning air as I watched a swarm of winged ants rise and fall in rainbow undulations about nine or ten feet above the ground. I found no sign of damage from the nocturnal bombardment except some fragments of boot, which I afterwards learnt were the remains of a new pair that Carter was looking forward to putting on this morning for the first time. We had breakfast in the Mess-tent without being disturbed by shells ; but just when we had lit our pipes and were setting out for a certain place, a real thumper came over from Asia and knocked a French biplane out, a useful first shot. It is bad enough to interfere with the night's repose or the morning bath, but man has a first duty more intimate than sleep, oblations to make as well as ablutions, which to postpone or disturb touches sacrilege. We rushed to earth and telephoned the air-people to take their supernal toys back to Tenedos so that we could make these oblations at leisure and with dignity. This, alas, we were not able to do, for nobody came to remove the aeroplanes till two hours had passed, and meanwhile the big Asiatic gun had been joined by a small one from Achi Baba. To add to the complication of our morning arrangements by shells, myriads of disappointed bachelors from that wedding party of winged ants were now crawling about in the one place we least wanted them just then.

I had expected to get up to the fire-trenches that morning; but instead I accompanied Colonel Street, the G.S.O. (1) to the other side of the Peninsula to see if more healthy headquarters could be found for the Army Corps in that direction. Shells were coming over all the time ; but none burst nearer to us than a hundred yards away. We kept meeting dead men sewn up in their blankets who were being carried down on stretchers to the cemetery. My companion had a grave, almost a sorrowful face, and nothwithstanding his thickset figure and the apparent vigour with which he moved he conveyed somehow an impression of profound

inward fatigue as if in spite of all his effort he could not hide the strain of the past two months. An eeriness crept across that grey-green landscape, for each time we met one of those dead men I had an intuition that Street himself was fey, and once or twice when he raised his hand in that last solemn salute to the passing dead, I could have fancied that he was already a dead man himself, so far from here were his eyes looking. And then somewhere on the road above the cliff on the west side he stopped a man on some fatigue duty to ask a question, which was answered casually and without a salute. Street at once turned on him in a rage, and cursed him up and down for his lack of discipline. A moment later he passed on, becoming immediately his pensive, grave, half-immaterial self again. It was a queer incident, and I can still see the expression of injured and disgusted amazement on the offender's face and the grey fury in Street's, and I can recall the sensation of suddenly passing back out of the real world of dust and din to the quietness of a grey-green land between life and death with which Street's quiet level voice this morning was in such concord, and to which his personality was so appropriate. On the way back he explained much about the campaign, and clarified for me some of my hazy notions about military operations. When he spoke of the way the Expedition had been treated at home there was an echo in his tones of that savage outburst against the fellow who had neglected to salute him, and I comprehended that he had not really lost his temper with an individual, but had used him to vent all his rage against the whole sorry scheme of things, all his grief and disappointment over what might have been out here.

Soon we were back at Army Corps Headquarters where we found that with the shelling so active it had been decided to use the Baronial Hall for lunch. When we entered with due ceremony, for this was the first meal to be taken in it,

the mess orderly came up to the General with a small spent shell.

"Hullo, hullo!" shouted Hunter-Bunter at the top of his form. "What's this little woofer? What a nice little chap! How did he get in?"

"Come in through the side, sir," the orderly replied indignantly, pointing to the narrow slit below the roof that let in the light.

"How jolly! Dear little chap! Came to give us a house warming. What is there for lunch? Ham! Beef! Capital."

Then singing to himself Hunter-Bunter took his seat at table and after sniffing the shell affectionately stood it up in front of his plate like a loaf of bread. He was in even more boisterous good-humour than usual, because having secured the D.S.O. for Colonel Wilson after the gallant affair of the night before last, he was anxious that we should all ride up with him to the firing-line and watch him present it in state. The French occasionally held ceremonious decorations at Sedd-el-Bahr. Hollow square: rolling drums: bayonets flashing in the moonlight: the Legion pinned on the warrior's breast and kisses pinned on his cheeks by his General's prickly moustache.

"That's the kind of thing the French do so much better than we do," Hunter-Bunter declared, throwing back his head and defying any of us to contradict him.

"But you can't kiss Colonel Wilson, sir," somebody objected.

"And we can't form a hollow square in the firing-line, sir," somebody else put in.

But Hunter-Bunter, with flashing eyes, spoke of the exhilaration of riding up to the trenches in the moonlight. As for me, I began to think I stood a chance of reaching Constantinople before anybody else if my horse took it into his unreasonable head to do so. I felt it was time to offer my mite of dissuasion.

"It won't be full moon for three or four days yet, sir. Last night at half-past eleven it was as black as ink."

"I'm afraid you'll have to excuse me, sir," said Plunket, whose broken collar-bone had been the result of a ride up to the fire-trenches.

"I never knew such an unenterprising set," Hunter-Bunter declared. "Well, Carter, you and I will have to ride up by ourselves and give this dear old boy the D.S.O. I hear he's nearly sixty."

"They strafed my new boots last night, sir," said Carter. "And there's this French show beginning at five o'clock to-morrow morning."

So in the end the expedition by moonlight was abandoned, for that night anyway. I may take this opportunity to set on record that Colonel Wilson's age, which by the time I got back to G.H.Q. had almost reached the allotted span, was actually at the date of his splendid feat still a week or so on the right side of forty.

After lunch I retired to a deck-chair in the General's office where it had been settled I should spend the night. Here, after a couple of hours of playing hide-and-seek with the flies in and out of sleep, I was finally summoned to tea from a really secure doze by the crash of a shell overhead, which shook half the contents of a sand-bag down over my face. Deedes arrived for tea, and about five o'clock he and I went out for a long walk.

"I want to get right away from the war for a couple of hours," he told me.

So we did not talk of the present, nor even much of the past. Instead, we reconstructed the British Empire after the war was over. Deedes was going to stand for Parliament, and Guy Dawnay was going to stand for Parliament, and I ought to stand for Parliament, and of course George Lloyd and Aubrey Herbert were in Parliament already.

"This sort of thing must never happen again in this kind of way," said Deedes firmly.

"No, it certainly must not," I agreed.

"More to the right, old thing," Deedes murmured. "We want to make for that clump of trees."

I hardly liked to point out to Deedes that the one place for which I felt we did not want to make at that moment was that very clump of trees, because it must have been quite as clear to Deedes as it was to myself that the clump of trees was at this moment being heavily sprayed by shrapnel.

"We've got to build up a new world," Deedes affirmed.

I thought that if we kept walking on at this pace toward that blasted shrapnel Deedes would be working on the housing-problem in another world altogether; but I only said:

"Although I am in sympathy with lots of things you and George and Aubrey and Guy want, I don't quite see how I could fight a constituency for the Conservatives. I'm not really a great believer in Tory Democracy, Deedes. I think we're getting a little too much to the right, aren't we? You know best, of course; I'm apt to lose my bearings." And unless we moved over a bit to the left fairly soon, I thought, I should be most unlikely ever to find them again. "Well, as I was saying, Deedes, when I thought we were getting a little too much to the right, the trouble for me over Tory Democrats has always been that like so many gentleman farmers they are neither Tories nor Democrats."

"Yes, I know what you mean," Deedes admitted gravely.

But I felt that Deedes had no idea at all what I meant, which was to engage him in such a tremendous argument over Tory Democracy that he would not notice how much harder I was steadily pressing with my left leg in order to obtain an offing from that clump of trees.

"I was up at Oxford, Deedes, when one wet afternoon

Maurice Woods had to read a Disraeli novel because he could find nothing else in the village inn to read. It was this which led him to preach Tory Democracy. I watched the re-birth of it in Oxford. They used to conspire even in my rooms, he and Henry Lygon and half the Canning Club. They simply could not stop conspiring. They would walk up and down, muttering 'B.M.G.,' which meant 'Balfour Must Go,'* and after that they used to go down in a troop to meet F. E. Smith at the railway-station just as if it were William of Orange landing in Torbay. I really can't be a Conservative. I can't belong to a party which pretends to take Ulster seriously."

Deedes was now walking briskly to the left, and I was wondering what had changed his mind when I saw ahead of us an Army Service Corp waggon galloping at full speed down the Krithia road, with shells bursting all round it.

"This is going to be a new party altogether," he said. "The old political divisions will no longer have any meaning for people who have been through this kind of thing."

"You mean like that driver who's galloping his waggon along the road just ahead of us?"

I felt I had managed rather cleverly to draw Deedes's attention to the state of mind of that driver; but he went on talking just as earnestly about the future. Feeling at last that the present had some claim on his consideration, I asked lightly what he thought was the calibre of the gun which was shelling the Krithia road.

"What gun?" Deedes asked vaguely.

"The one that damned nearly got that A.S.C. waggon exactly where we're going."

"I didn't notice a waggon."

"Well, it got over the brow all right without being hit."

* Only last year 1928 seated in a dim corner of a London club I overheard two junior members of the Conservative party muttering to one another 'Baldwin must go.' A quarter of a century had written not one wrinkle on the azure brow of Conservatism.

Though Deedes was actually a month or two younger than myself, I felt like a child being led by its parent down a long beach to be taught to swim in a rough and cold sea, so rapidly were we drawing nearer to the exact spot where the last shell had burst.

"We'll go round by the Twenty-ninth Headquarters," he announced.

The lower part of the notorious Gully Ravine or Saghir Deré, on the slopes of which stood Divisional Headquarters, was singing with spent bullets. I saw General de Lisle on the opposite slope and, as in a dream, walking with him the pleasant officer with the oblong face whose advice I had asked about the sailing of the *Franconia* in the Hotel Majestic at Alexandria just over a month ago. I sat down to rest while Deedes went across and chatted with them for a few minutes.

"All very cheerful," he proclaimed, when he rejoined me. "But the flies are pretty bad."

"They don't mind the spent bullets?"

"Bullets?" repeated Deedes in mild astonishment.

"Well, I've seen four men knocked over while I've been sitting here, and I don't suppose they were knocked over by flies."

We turned down now to walk back by the road which had been built along the undercliff by Turkish prisoners and Egyptians. The sea was thronged with bathers in spite of the shrapnel which was continually bursting over them. Sitting with their backs to the cliff were men brewing tea and eating away at bread and jam exactly as they would have done at Margate. The road itself was thronged with promenaders of every kind—tall grave Sikhs, charming dapper little Gurkhas, button-headed Egyptians, Zionist muleteers, Greek hawkers, Scottish Borderers, Irish Fusiliers, Welshmen, men from Lancashire, Hampshire, Essex, and Worcestershire, Cockney Royals, Gunners, Sap-

pers, and as many more different types besides. The laughter and shouting and babble rendered it impossible even for Deedes to make himself clear on the subject of the future. The heat from the westering sun full on the tawny cliffs was intense. The dazzle of the water was blinding. Occasionally stretcher-bearers would pass with a man who had been hit, as you may see stretcher-bearers jostle through the crowds at Margate with a woman who has fainted on a torrid August Bank Holiday. One fellow who was testing the water with his foot before he plunged in gave a loud yell.

"Come on in, Bill, it ain't cold," shouted a small Cockney pal who was splashing about in four feet of water.

"Cold be ——d," shouted Bill, "I've got a bloody bullet in my bloody toe."

And back he hopped across the dusty undercliff road like a paddling child who has cut its foot on a piece of glass.

At last we rounded the corner and reached Lancashire Landing, where Deedes was living in a tent and working away at his reports of interrogated prisoners as oblivious of the discomfort and danger in which he was living as the Sister of Mercy, of whom he always reminded me, would have been of the seething externals of the slum where her mission lay.

"Well, so long, old thing," he said to me. "It's been a wonderful walk, and such a tremendous relief to get absolutely right away from the war for a couple of hours."

I gasped for a moment and stared at him. But no, the figure standing there in the amber light of the evening was not joking; it was indeed of candour and sincerity compact.

I slept soundly in the General's office that night, thanks to that quiet country walk with Deedes, and glad I was to do so, for at half-past four I was to be up and watching from a forward observation-post the attempt that was going to be made by the French to strengthen our line on

the extreme right. I was woken by a loud noise which, as I opened my eyes and sat up in bed, I thought must be a shell which had somehow entered the dug-out. However, it proved on investigation to be Major-General Egerton and his Staff who had just landed.

"Major-General Egerton and the Staff of the Fifty-second Lowland Division!" somebody proclaimed.

There was a good deal of stamping and saluting to which I could not respond with any bravura owing to my being barefooted and in pyjamas. However, I told them that a battle was going to begin presently and that if they cared to come up to General Hunter-Weston's observation-post after they had had some breakfast I thought they might enjoy it. There was more clanking and stamping and clicking, and we parted to meet later.

It was a most exquisite morning. The heavy bombardment of the Turkish left, as I sat peacefully by myself and watched it, my elbows on the sill of the observation-post which had been dug out of what looked like a rounded chalky hump of the South Downs, provided a pageantry of mist more wonderful than was ever beheld by Shelley's autumnal stream. The dawn had been clear; but presently a curtain of silver, through which gleamed the ghost of the rising sun, hung in ethereal loveliness of texture over the Kereves Deré. This was the smoke of bursting shells. Gradually as the sun climbed higher the curtain became more substantial. Then it seemed to droop and sweep along the hollows like a defeated river mist by Windrush or by Evenlode when the spears of the sun come flashing over the bald Oxfordshire hills. For a brief space there was a respite from the bombardment while I sat entranced watching the delicate stems of wood smoke twirl tremulously up from the bivouac fires of the French camp among the trees, to drift as blue as hyacinths upon the still air. Presently my glasses caught a long row of extraordinary

objects. What were they ? A row of pumpkins ? No. I looked again. A row of Frenchmen squatting on their haunches. Even that sight the alchemy of this morning air transumed with opalescent loveliness, as mangel-wurzels in a field at sunset will sometimes glow like amethysts.

The respite did not last long. The bombardment was renewed with greater fierceness than before. The 75's drummed unceasingly. The reverberation of the 125's and of the howitzers shook the observation-post. As the sun mounted higher, all that first mirage of beauty gradually faded. Over the Kereves Deré and beyond, upon Achi Baba himself, what had been a shimmering curtain was now a pall. Presently that pall was lifted to reveal the monstrous shapes of bursting shells, fierce jinn of livid green and black and foul yellow smoke that kept appearing one after another along the Turkish lines.

It must have been after breakfast that I took General Egerton and his Staff to view the bombardment for a while, after which we sat on the sun-burnished turf of the chalky knoll—I write chalky, but it was probably a light marl—and looked back to where the *St. Louis* at the entrance of the Straits was lending her aid in the bombardment. Surrounded by fidgety destroyers and trawlers, she might have been a fat grey goose with her goslings, but that they were protecting her, not she them. General Egerton was a man of much charm and a fine courtliness. We were talking about gardens, I think, when one of those big shells from Asia came rattling overhead like the last motor-bus going home to burst somewhere above W beach. At the sound of the shell he and his Staff flung themselves down flat so quickly that I could not get down in time to keep them company. We were all very apologetic, because General Egerton was anxious to explain why they had flung themselves down and I was equally anxious to explain why I had not.

"Yes, yes, I know," he said indulgently. "But one of them might fall short. It's foolish to take unnecessary risks."

I was determined not to be caught sitting up again, and when the next one came rattling over I plunged down with such vigour that I bumped my nose against an old earthwork and got my mouth full of marl. By the time two or three more shells had gone over we were all as dusty as millers, and the Staff were beginning to look a bit ruefully at their uniforms and beautifully polished belts. Gradually, as shell after shell passed over to explode far beyond our position we came from throwing ourselves down like tragic actresses to swaying like dervishes, and then to nodding like mandarins, and then to raising our eyebrows and watching where the shell burst, and finally not to looking at them at all. That big Asiatic gun was extraordinary. From where we were sitting we could see the white flash on the other side of the Straits when it was fired. Then the shell about fifteen seconds later would roar past overhead and explode away over on the other side of the Peninsula, and finally, as a ridiculous anticlimax, the original noise it had made when it was fired would reach us like a muffled bark. The gallant Staff of the splendid Lowland Division did not have to concern themselves for long about the spickness and spanness of their appearance, for within another thirty-six hours of that sunny morning of the year's longest day they would have been looking back on those big shells rumbling and rattling overhead from Asia as the mere noise of London traffic compared with what they were so instantly to learn of war. General Egerton himself was to fall gravely ill in July and be invalided home; but not before he too may have asked himself if the march to Kandahar when he had been severely wounded or the battles of Tel-el-Kebir, Atbara, and Omdurman, at all of which he had been present, had revealed to him anything compared with Gallipoli of the reality of war.

By noon the Second Division of the French had on the left of our right flank stormed and captured all the Turkish trenches of the first two lines. Even the Haricot Redoubt, with its damnable entanglements and its maze of communicating trenches, was in French hands. On the extreme right, however, the First Division, after reaching their objective, had been counter-attacked so effectively that they had fallen back. Again they advanced; again they took the trenches; again they were driven out. It began to look as if the victory upon the left would be as fruitless as the victory of the Naval Division still further to the left had been upon the Fourth of June. But this time there would be no Collingwood almost to obliterate if the Second French Division should once again find the Haricot Redoubt an untenable salient and let it revert to the enemy. About half-past three General Gouraud sent a message to the Divisional Commander to say that the trenches must be recaptured and when recaptured held. There were still five hours of daylight, the General pointed out, for this battle of the longest day. There need be no hurry. There would be another preliminary bombardment at half-past five. And then the trenches must be recaptured.

Captain Churchill of the Twelfth Bengal Cavalry had arrived about lunch to be extra A.D.C. to General Hunter-Weston, and I was told off to take him round and show him the lie of the country before he began his duties. Churchill was most anxious to see a shell burst somewhere near him. It worried him to think that he had been in the Army for thirteen years, and that he had never seen a shot fired in anger yet. So, feeling that it was up to me to fill in this gap in his professional experience as soon as possible, I decided to take him for the walk Deedes had taken me the evening before. We found a meadow-pipit's nest with four or five eggs in it quite close to that shrapnel-sprayed clump of trees; but unfortunately not a shell came near it this afternoon.

"It's most extraordinary," I said, feeling a little nettled. "You can nearly always count on a shell here."

"Perhaps there'll be one in a minute or two," Churchill suggested hopefully.

We hung about for a while on the chance of a shell; but it was no use, so I cheered him up by telling him he might see one presently, and with that I took him up to the road which they had been plastering the evening before with 4.7's. Not a shell here either. Even our bombardment had stopped, though the rifles were crackling like a bonfire of dry faggots far away on the right.

"I can't think why there aren't any shells here," I grumbled. "There were plenty of them yesterday." And I pointed to some of the spoon-shaped depressions they had scooped out of the ground. Churchill looked at them as a sportsman at the end of a blank day might look at a hare's form without the hare.

I suggested going down to the Gully Ravine past the Twenty-ninth's Headquarters. I said I could at any rate guarantee him plenty of spent bullets and probably some shrapnel, which Churchill politely made the best of in the way a sportsman will make the best of his host's rabbits after the poor behaviour of the pheasants. But when we reached the Gully there was not a bullet within earshot. Their song might have vanished with the Sirens' for all we could hear of it. So we sat down and waited for them to begin. Churchill told me how disappointed he was not to have got out here in time to see the flowers in their glory, and we went on to talk about an extraordinary black iris which grew like a weed in his father's garden at Broadstairs.

"The Great Turkey or Spotted Flower de Luce!" I cried.

"Where?" he said, looking round. "I don't see it."

"No, no, Churchill, not a shell. That's the name

Parkinson gives to that iris in your father's garden. Iris Susiana."

"That's it," he exclaimed in surprise. "But how on earth did you know about it?"

"It was planted in the garden at Stone House by Archbishop Tait. You can read about it in Robinson."

"But that house is my father's school."

"Of course, now I know who you are. Why, your father took on Stone House from my father-in-law, E. D. Stone."

In the excitement of this discovery Churchill forgot all about his desire to see a shell burst near him and I forgot to pick up my kangaroo-skin tobacco-pouch when we walked on. This was the third pouch I had lost since I came out, and I was reduced for a week or two to carrying my tobacco about in quarter-pound tins until I managed to buy a large purse for it in Tenedos. Churchill and I agreed how much my dear old father-in-law, who was then about eighty, would have enjoyed being out here, for he thrived on noise, being extremely deaf, and he would have heard everything that was said to him if a sixty-pounder had been crashing away close at hand. In his old age he could only gratify that love of noise by slamming every door in the house behind him one after another more loudly than I ever heard anybody slam doors. I had only just had a letter from him, a typical letter in his exquisite scholar's hand, throughout which he had not said one word about the Dardanelles campaign, but had discussed at great length the attitude of the Catholic Church over Modernism. Dear E.D.S., whose Latin verses in the lamented *Saturday Westminster* were at once the despair and the delight of rival scholars, his venerable head was beside us that June day while we were walking back over the dusty scrub toward Army Corps Headquarters, with never a shell to amuse Churchill the whole of the way.

Indeed, Churchill was so much struck by the peace of

Gallipoli that presently when we were standing by the aerodrome he looked up and began to rhapsodize after the style of Mr. Pickwick from his bedroom window that fine May morning at Dingley Dell just before the rook-shooting.

"It's all so calm," he said. "Who could imagine a shell falling here? What's that ripping-looking island over there? Imbros? My gad, how topping! And that's really Asia over there? The peace of it is really . . . hullo . . . what are those grooms ducking for?"

I watched his eyes follow the course of a shell as it came roaring over from peaceful Asia, and passed only a few feet above our heads—I could actually see the brute sailing along—to bury its nose with a grunt in the earth just behind us.

"What was that?" he asked in bewilderment.

"A dud."

"A dud what?"

"A dud shell."

"Good lord, I thought it was an aeroplane. Well, I'm glad I've seen one at last, even though it was only a dud."

Just after this we heard the crash of our renewed bombardment on the right, and hurried up to the observation-post. It seemed when we got there, a few minutes after half-past five, as if every gun on earth was pouring shells on the Turkish lines. It must be remembered that the French were far better supplied with guns and ammunition than we were, and this afternoon we were contributing some of our precious high explosives as well.

At six o'clock the third assault was delivered. In one trench there was a temporary shortage of ammunition, but the enemy fought even with stones and sticks and fists. A battalion that came hurrying up from the Turkish right to reinforce it was caught on the open ground by the 75's and melted away. Six hundred yards of Turkish trenches were taken, and still the bombardment was continued in

order to ward off the counter-attack that was anticipated. The smoke of the shells, which at dawn had been ethereal, almost tralucent, was now in the sunset turbid and sinister. Yet the sunset itself was of a splendour unusual even in that land of splendid sunsets. It flamed in crimson streamers over Imbros; it tinted the east with rosy reflections; it turned the peaks of Asia to sapphires; and it had a peculiar significance on this longest day of the year, crowning as it did those precious five hours of daylight that for the French had been fraught with such achievement. Slowly the colour faded out; now, minute by minute, the flashes of the guns became more distinct, the smoke was merged in the gathering dusk; and away over the more distant Turkish lines the bursts of shrapnel came out like stars against the brief twilight.

I slept very soundly that night, and only woke once to hear an aeroplane pass overhead at one-thirty a.m. I was told next morning that it was Samson* flying northward on his way to bomb Constantinople. We had good news at breakfast from French Headquarters to say that in spite of counter-attacks the Haricot Redoubt was safe in our possession.

Perhaps Samson's journey to Constantinople put the notion into the enemy's head of bombing G.H.Q. at Imbros, for a Taube started off to do so, but was headed off by two of our 'planes, and we had a thrilling show to watch up in the air, which ended in the Taube's being driven down into bad country on the other side of Achi Baba. He dropped three whacking bombs over us before he fled, one of which killed a poor chap and nine horses. The other two came down close to where I was standing. I saw the bombs start on their infernal way, and heard those terrible oooh-ahs, of which I have already written, quickening till the final detonating crash, which left me feeling rather sick with

*Air Commodore C. R. Samson, C.M.G., D.S.O., R.N.

fright for a minute or two. However, I was only lightly dusted, and suffered no damage but a crick in the neck through watching the out-manœuvring of the black devil afterwards. Our airmen returned full of excitement, and one of them came hurrying out of a shed with a hundred-pound bomb in each hand, looking like a gymnastic instructor with a pair of Indian clubs. He was going back at once to drop them on the disabled Taube where it lay. After he had gone I picked up from the dust a pink oval of cardboard on which was printed, REMOVE THIS PIN BEFORE DROPPING, which seemed somehow as remote from the deadly business he had in hand as a cloak-room ticket.

That morning I had my third floral talk since my arrival at Army Corps Headquarters. This time it was with Carter, who was much excited about a wonderful plant which he said was growing in the cliff just this side of V beach. I could not identify it from his description, which sounded like something between a giant campanula, a cattleya, and a pansy. I racked my head for what it could be; but the more carefully Carter tried to describe it the more remote from any known flower it gradually came to seem. Finally we agreed to go down after lunch to look for it.

"Though we shall have a bit of a scramble over the rocks," the genial Carter warned me.

But the spirit that animated the orchid-hunters of Borneo whose adventures in the *Boy's Own Paper* thrilled my youthful ambition urged me on; and I needed it, for in addition to scrambling over the slimy rocks in the stagnant heat under the cliff we had to negotiate four dead horses whose united stench might have made even a bomb bounce back from it like a tennis-ball. It was impossible to hurry over these rocks; and the horses were lying at intervals, so that as soon as the stench from one had begun to grow a little less the next one took it up in canon as it were. When we reached a point midway between the four of them I thought

that the combination of dead horse and sun-staled seaweed was beyond anything imaginable in beastliness. Actually the smell of death at Anzac was worse, because it lasted longer. One had whiffs of that in the nostrils for nearly a fortnight afterwards. But for sheer violence of immediate discomfort this smell was worse, and it was not until I savoured the stench of a whaling-station years later that I found anything to compete with it. However, fired by Carter's description I was beginning to dream of a floral novelty that would send a murmur round St. Vincent's Hall and perhaps jolt even the omniscience of Kew.

"There you are," Carter exclaimed as triumphantly as if to reward my perseverance in climbing over dead horses and slimy rocks and pools blear with the sun's rays he were offering me a vision of the Golden Rose itself. He pointed to where a compact shrub was growing in a crevice half-way up the cliff, each snow-white blossom of which was wearing an aigrette of purple stamens.

"Why, that's a caper. You've tasted the flower buds often enough with boiled mutton."

Carter looked disappointed. I think he had dreamed of *Carteria gallipolitana* and of being congratulated by Reginald Farrar on a valuable addition to the sunny sides of rock gardens.

"You told me that the blossoms were a little like pansies," I said reproachfully. "If you had said they were like a white and purple St. John's wort or even a passion flower, I might have. . . ."

"By Jove, I'm sorry I lugged you all the way over those stinking horses for nothing," Carter broke in, his own chubby face nearly as purple as the stamens of the caper with the exertion of the scramble.

In a moment I was ashamed of myself, for after all I had not seen *Capparis spinosa* anywhere else out here, and who seeing it for the first time would not suppose that none had

ever beheld it before him, so strange and beautiful would it be seeming ?

" I wouldn't have missed seeing it for anything," I said with complete sincerity.

And then the good A.D.C. in Carter drove out for a moment the gardener.

" Capers ? I wonder if there are any flower-buds left on. We might pickle a few for the General."

" Too late in the season," I replied.

The gardener retook the trench from the A.D.C.

" If we're still here when it seeds I shall send some home and have a shot at growing it," Carter announced.

But next month General Hunter-Weston was to fall ill, and I do not think that Carter stayed long enough to gather the seeds of that caper. But the caper itself will still be growing in that cliff, for it is a long-lived plant ; and every year those snowy blossoms with fragile filaments stained seemingly by wine will flutter in the wind above a stretch of hallowed sea which was once stained in very fact by Irish and by English blood. They took away the *River Clyde* and sold her to tramp the Mediterranean with coals. For the sake of a few hundred pounds they were not willing that her plates should slowly rust away in memory of that April morning, rust away in red flakes and like the blood of the men she carried be mingled at last with the sea. And maybe those white and purple caper flowers will again have nodded to her in the June breeze when she has steamed past Sedd-el-Bahr, carrying coals for her Greek owner up the Dardanelles to Constantinople, she who once anchored off here with a cargo of heroes, they too bound for Constantinople. But they sold her, and I would that the man who signed the order might carry in his nose till death the stench of those four horses.

## CHAPTER XI

### TENEDOS FOR THE SECOND TIME

I RETURNED to G.H.Q. immediately after the battle of the Twenty-first of June in order to write my despatch for the papers, and what a relief it was to hear that Ashmead-Bartlett would be out here again within a few days. The last thing in the world I wanted to be was a war-correspondent, for I knew I should never make even a moderately good one, and I dreaded being tied down to the routine such a job would involve. I was feeling resentful, too, against the Newspaper Proprietors who, though they had never suggested paying me a penny for my work, had announced me to the public as their special correspondent. Maxwell with his pompous quacking about Fleet Street sensitiveness had been exasperating me, and I told him once that I wished the Newspaper Proprietors could have a taste of the Kephalo flies and latrine poles and the shells of that eight-inch gun on the Asiatic side of the Straits. The *Daily Mail* took care to explain the circumstances in which I was writing for it, and there was no reason why the other papers should not have done the same. I finally received a telegram of grudging thanks for my work; but presumably in order to avoid including Sir Ian Hamilton in this belated courtesy the telegram was addressed to me c/o Chief Naval Officer, Mudros, whatever that ambiguous person might be. It is only since reading *The Uncensored Dardanelles* that I have realized what a petty motive was attributed to Sir Ian Hamilton's offer of my

services during Ashmead-Bartlett's absence. Yet no man was more alive than Sir Ian himself to the value and might of the Press and no man was less likely to try to injure its dignity. Bartlett praises Maxwell's loyalty. He may have been loyal to Bartlett; but he was not so loyal to his Commander-in-Chief, and he undoubtedly seconded Bartlett's efforts to convey an impression at home that an attempt was being made by the General Staff to cover up their misdeeds at the expense of the accredited representative of the Press.

I extract the following from the Official History of the Gallipoli Operations :*

*In Gallipoli on the 6th, 7th, and 8th May Sir Ian Hamilton attacked with* 20,000 *troops on a three-mile front. He was supported during the course of those three days with a total of some* 18,500 *rounds of ammunition, including those fired by the ships and the French artillery, or an average of about* 6,000 *rounds a day, principally field-gun shrapnel. His force advanced* 600 *yards at the expense of* 6,500 *casualties. The enemy's trench system was not yet complete, and was nowhere protected by wire, and the main obstacle to progress had been unlocated machine guns concealed in natural cover.*

*On the following day, at Aubers Ridge in France, three divisions of Sir Douglas Haig's First Army* (30,000 *infantry*) *with eight more brigades* (25,000 *infantry*) *waiting in reserve, attacked two sectors of the German heavily-wired and fortified line on a frontage of two miles. They were supported by* 500 *guns, which fired* 80,000 *rounds in the course of the day, mostly in a forty-minute preliminary bombardment. These three divisions suffered* 11,000 *casualties. They were unable to gain a yard of ground. They did not attract a single company from the German reserves to the British battle front;*

* By permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.

*and at nightfall the attack was abandoned on the score that its continuance would be useless waste of life.*

*The* 18,500 *rounds of all calibres expended during the three previous days in Gallipoli could not have made the difference between success and failure on this French battlefield. But the fired* 80,000 *rounds against Aubers Ridge, and even two out of the three divisions launched that day against the German trenches, had they been available for the Second Battle of Krithia, might well have carried Sir Ian Hamilton to the Narrows and the fleet to Constantinople.*

On May 14th a leading article in *The Times* declared :

*British soldiers died in vain on the Aubers Ridge on Sunday because more shells were needed. The Government, who have so seriously failed to organize adequately our national resources, must bear their share of the grave responsibility. Even now they will not fully face the situation.*

On May 14th Ashmead-Bartlett wrote in his diary :

*The* Queen Elizabeth *has disappeared . . . what a moral loss to the Army! No more will the weary infantry ashore listen to the sound of those huge shells . . . or watch the gigantic explosions as they strike the enemy's line. No more will the Turks advancing to the attack suddenly find fifteen thousand shrapnel bullets sprayed over their heads, sweeping their lines away like corn beneath the scythe—so some claim.*

Although from those last three words Ashmead-Bartlett did not presumably believe in the effective value of the *Queen Elizabeth*, he must have been aware of the deficiency of shells at Gallipoli. Why, then, was there no leading article on that deficiency in *The Times* of June 10th ? He was received by the Newspaper Proprietors in conclave on June 9th, and thousands of British soldiers had died

in vain on the slopes of Achi Baba because more shells were needed. Apparently the new Government was every bit as unwilling to face the situation fully as the old one had been. It is perhaps unfair to suggest that Ashmead-Bartlett could have prevailed on the authorities at home to face facts ; but, if instead of dangling a map of the Dardanelles before Mr. Asquith and convincing him that by the seizure of Bulair the peninsula of Gallipoli could be wrung as easily as the neck of a goose, he had said over and over again the three words ' Guns and shells ' his visit to Downing Street might have been more fruitful.

When Sir Ian heard of Ashmead-Bartlett's imminent return he told me to get appointed special correspondent to some paper like *The Manchester Guardian*. I felt that if I tried to do this it would only lead to more misunderstandings, but it would have been difficult for me to suggest this to him without suggesting at the same time that I was shirking. I saw clearly enough that from his point of view the only possible use I could be out here was as a writer, and what could have been more galling to the vanity of a writer who fancied he was on active service than such an obvious truth ? Of course, as matters stood at home, there was not a chance of any newspaper's employing my services; but I could not tell Sir Ian that without appearing ungrateful, and I confided to Deedes my depression over the prospect. We are all so anxious nowadays to repudiate our intellectual surrender to the war that it will sound like an outmoded affectation to say that I was obsessed by the desire to take an active part in it. When Maxwell said to me that he supposed I had been fetched out here to write up Sir Ian's triumphal entry into Constantinople I could have knocked him down, not, I regret to add, for the sneer at Sir Ian, but because he was implying that my pen was so obviously mightier than my sword. This may appear very silly and snobbish ; but it does not mean that I

despised the pen. It only means that my writing, which I had originally regarded as a pleasant little accomplishment, was by the accident of success already beginning to show signs of becoming a drudgery. The war was providing me with the first holiday I had enjoyed since I was up at Oxford, and I hated its being interfered with. Happy the man who dips his pen into the ink-pot with as much gusto as an epicure sticks his fork into an oyster.

Deedes was most sympathetic, and out of compassion he at once improvised for me an active job. He told me that he badly required my services to move about among the islands and keep him in touch with our espionage and contre-espionage agents. He said Ian Smith* was kept so busy moving round between Helles, Anzac, and G.H.Q. that there was never a chance for him to visit the islands. Ian Smith had been appointed Military Consul at Van just when the war broke out. He was a delightful fellow, whose pronunciation of Turkish was probably the most acute hardship that Deedes had to endure at Gallipoli. While 'Jan' Smith was interrogating prisoners, I have watched Deedes sitting in a corner of the tent with an expression on his face such as you may see on a musical aunt listening to a piano solo being played by an unmusical niece. My own memories of Jan Smith are chiefly connected with his picture of Van, which for one who was not ordinarily eloquent was so vivid that to this day Van towers in my imagination above its cold lake like some citadel before the gates of which Roland had once sounded his olifant. He also told me the regimental legend of a major who was reputed to use black silk sheets, such a connoisseur was he of feminine line. So with these two tales I see Jan Smith standing between an engraving after Doré and a pen and ink sketch by Aubrey Beardsley.

"I want you to go over to Tenedos as soon as possible

*Lt.-Col. Ian M. Smith, D.S.O., M.C.

and see what can be done about getting hold of a motor-boat for us. We really cannot go on being dependent on the casual help of the 'Nivy.'"

When things went wrong with the transport of our agents or interpreters Deedes was wont to console himself by quoting the first line of a faded patriotic ditty with Cockney vowels, '*It's the Nivy, the Royal Nivy!*'

"Then you can consult with Harold Thompson and find out the possibilities of landing a gang of desperadoes in Bezika Bay either to knock out that Asiatic gun or bring us back information for the Navy about its exact whereabouts. And then I want you to go into the question with Thompson of our contre-espionage people on Tenedos. V has been sending more alarmist telegrams recently from Athens about their trustworthiness."

And finally, which to my mind sounded the best job of all, a suspected traitor was to be lured to Tenedos and I was to have the pleasure of bringing him back with me to Imbros where he was to be examined about his alleged misdeeds. I felt through her holster the thrill of my virgin pistol; even war had its Freudian moments.

On Friday, the twenty-fifth of June, I set out early in the morning for that island dearly loved by Apollo, and if the god had as nice an eye for maidens, then Daphne must have been a peach before ever she was a laurel. To digress for a moment into an aside for island-lovers, who will be understanding me when I assert that Tenedos immediately takes its place as an island in the grand style. I have not yet actually left a footprint on every island in the world, and I am already too old now ever to achieve such an ambition. But I have done what I venture to think few other people have done; I have visited in spirit every salt-water island known to geographers. In other words I have read right through the seventy-four volumes of the *Admiralty Sailing Directions;* and when I have discovered among them an island that

struck me as worthy of a more careful exploration, I have tried to reinforce my knowledge of it. Flamingoes on the shores of Formentera! This is not a line from Milton, but a prosaic statement about one of the smaller Balearic Islands in the first volume of the *Mediterranean Pilot;* yet notwithstanding that hint of myriads of rosy plumes in the sunrise I do not believe that, were I to land on Formentera, I should hail it as the true, the blushful Hippocrene. I have an uneasy suspicion that I may be missing something by refusing to visit Majorca, but the more I read about it, the more deeply I suspect it of being only *faux bon*. I would liefer spend long weeks of deep-sea sailing to Tematangi Island in the Low Archipelago, whose inhabitants are stated in the third volume of the *Pacific Islands Pilot* to have been strongly suspected of eating the shipwrecked crew of the *Sarah Anne* in 1858. I am curious to know if the present inhabitants really are as friendly as they are said to be in the last edition. I firmly believe that when a philonese who has had a wide practical experience and a very wide theoretical experience of islands steps ashore on a fresh strand he knows immediately whether or not he has fed on honeydew or held infinity in the palm of his hand or done any of the things with which poets have sought to flash truth upon the inward eye. That is always the problem of the new island. Is it a world within a world within infinity, or but the empty shell of a perfect world? Land upon Capri, upon Iona, upon Samos, upon Tenedos, upon my own Shiant Islands, and you are aware of completeness, however dissimilar the externals of that completeness may appear. Land upon Corfu, upon Syra, upon Chios, upon Madeira, and you are aware of something lacking. I know with absolute certitude that I shall declare when I land upon Eriskay '*hoc erat in votis*'.* I believe I should declare

* I have since done so, and my instinct was right. Barra is another island in the superlatively grand style.

the same upon Lord Howe Island, and certainly upon Pitcairn. I feel equally positive that I should say it of none of the Spice Islands, nor of Rarotonga, nor even of the green Azores, though these I sailed by once on a witching gusty twilight of March when if ever Sirens sang to a passing ship they should have sung then.

We were greeted off Anzac by a shower of shrapnel when we called there on our way to Tenedos that morning, the bullets sounding a tattoo on the iron deck of the trawler.

"I'm blest if I know what I'll do when I get back to Lowestoft," the old skipper muttered. "I'm getting so used to shot an' shell that I'm going to miss it when this is all over. You'd better hop up here on the bridge beside of me."

Before I joined him in the shelter of the chart-room, I stooped to pick up some of the bullets which were rolling about on the deck.

"Collecting souvenirs?" he inquired with a hoarse indulgent guffaw. "You're fresh out here I reckon. Like a kid with marbles."

While he was still chuckling to himself over the comparison, the mail-bags came on board. On the beach high explosive shells were bursting. We could see men hurrying hither and thither like disturbed ants.

"Life on shore there?" observed the skipper, taking his pipe out of his mouth and spitting solemnly. "Well, poor b——rs, that's all I can say."

After which comment on the situation at Anzac he slung the wheel round, and we headed south.

It must have been about lunch time when we reached Tenedos. The jackdaws were hopping and cawing about on the red roofs: the narrow streets overhung by trellised vines offered coolness to the voyager: the clustered windmills on the low hill behind the town shimmered against the azure: in the shade of the huge walls of the Genoese castle

children were playing their immemorial games by the quay-side of the outer harbour: the fishing-boats in the inner harbour rested idly upon water of such a clear and luminous aquamarine and so profoundly still that the lightest straw upon the surface seemed embedded in glass: in the near distance the green cone of Mount Elias rose abruptly out of that fruitful flowery countryside, and away eastward, mountain behind mountain proclaimed the majesty of Asia. There was Harold Thompson (who must not be confused with John Thomson, that Pentapolin of the Naked Arm) standing on the quay to see what the trawler was bringing from the noisy world of action to vex this quiet island loved by Apollo.

"Captain Loring is just coming down," he announced.

"Captain Loring?"*

"The Military Governor. He succeeded Major Temple."

Just then I was welcomed by a small man, whose white naval uniform seemed to be as much a part of this delicious landscape as the fantail pigeons whirling overhead; and I was aware of the perfect governor for this perfect little island.

Behind Captain Loring was the thin form of Surgeon Higgins, R.N., who had been saved from the *Ocean* on the fatal Eighteenth of March. He had those soft light-blue Irish eyes which can turn in a moment to flames when temper is required, a brogue as gentle as a mild moist wind from the West, and a nature to match it. He was an elder brother of Kevin O'Higgin, and strange it is now to look back on those two brothers through the red mist of later tragedy. Their father, a much beloved doctor, was to be shot by the Irregulars before the eyes of the family upon his own lawn, and Kevin himself was to be assassinated at a street corner on the way to Mass. I met that younger brother in 1924. The garden walls on either side of the road leading to his

*Vice-Admiral E. K. Loring, C.B.

house in Dublin were covered with menacing inscriptions such as DEATH TO KEVIN O'HIGGIN AND THE MURDER GANG. It was like driving in a nightmare to pass those threats sprawling across the mildewed walls in giant letters of green paint, and at the end of it to reach the quiet house of the Minister of Justice. In the large room where we had tea a faint mustiness of damp westerly airs was exhaled from the faded covers of the ugly late Victorian furniture, and through the french-windows opening on to an oblong of garden full of lank grass and gawky shrubs the light of the late August afternoon seemed to float in tempered by the prevailing leafiness without to the green-veiled air of an aquarium. Kevin O'Higgin himself, a dark man with the face of a Peter Martyr or Savonarola, moved restlessly about the aqueous shades, his fingers yellow with incessant cigarette-smoking, his neck craning nervously, his eyes set narrowly in a lean face and burning with fanatic zeal. He had been arrested during the troubles through the mistake of some stupid Englishman, and like Parnell, whose uniform as a subaltern in the Wicklow Rifles was mistaken by the police for Fenian regimentals, he required but that to make him an active enemy of Anglo-Saxon domination. . . .

But back to the lucid air of Tenedos and the gentle brogue of Jack Higgins as he whispered to me of Captain Loring :

" The finest little fellow God ever made ! "

The Governor's house was no longer the gloomy barrack it had seemed when Kenny and I spent the night there during our search for G.H.Q. No house could have been gloomy with Captain Loring presiding over its hearth. He had been Naval Transport Officer at Anzac, and to me who had come to regard Pintos and Pamelos* as types of human discontent Captain Loring seemed a miracle of geniality.

*P.N.T.O. (Principal Naval Transport Officer).
P.M.L.O. (Principal Military Landing Officer).

Orlo Williams's ballad of the Pinto and the Pamelo in the metre of the Walrus and the Carpenter had expressed what most of us felt about beach officers of either service. It is noticeable that many sea-birds have disagreeable expressions, but there are exceptions like the kittiwake, of which engaging little bird the Governor of Tenedos reminded me. Like most men who love laughter he kept a good table, and his sparsely furnished establishment managed wonderfully to achieve the atmosphere of the captain's quarters in a battleship. Even Darwin smiled when he was unpacking my kit and volunteered the remark that this *was* a *little* bit more like home.

That afternoon Captain Loring suggested a ride over to the aerodrome. He had an amenable pony called Tino, and he produced another equally amenable for his guest. We might have been riding in Devonshire, through such a rich countryside did the road meander; and when from the top of a high green bank starred yellow and blue with hawksweed and scabious a huddle of Turkish tombstones peeped over at us abruptly, it came as a shock to see such unfamiliar objects in what was seeming such familiar country. Any graveyard will beguile my fancy, but Turkish graveyards most of all. It is the way those tall thin tombstones with their round heads lean over to one another in eternal colloquy. Little magic would the moon need to cast for me to suppose, should I pass beneath her beams a Turkish graveyard at midnight, that I was watching a feast of ghouls; and, if I linger in memory over those rolling grassy mounds above the roadside and recall too long those tall thin, round-headed tombstones of dead Turks, it is because I am dismayed by the prospect of trying to evoke the atmosphere of the Royal Naval Air Service camp on the other side of the island.

The Air Service had been hastily improvised, and, it is scarcely necessary to add, it had been as much starved of

material as everything else out there. There was not even a good camera, and the very observers were mostly untrained midshipmen chosen like jockeys or coxes for their lack of weight. So, it was not surprising to find a Mess in which one felt the absence of any tradition except a dauntless gallantry and the consciousness of sudden death at the elbow. A small hot marquee. Two dozen men in various oddments of uniform or shirt-sleeves sitting along a trestle table, eating bread and jam and drinking large cups of very much sweetened tea. A great deal of laughter, but always a suppressed nervous tension. Plenty of flies, but not so many as elsewhere, not more than you would find in a village grocer's toward the end of a hot August, and perhaps the comparison to a village grocer's is suggested by my recollection of the smell of the dry packing-cases on which we sat. At the head of the table Samson himself, a thick-set man with a trim brown beard. The conversation is almost entirely about aeroplane parts, or so it seems to me as I listen back to it fourteen years later, aeroplane parts and a few schoolboy jokes.

It was about this time that Colonel Sykes* came out from England to take in hand and bring into line with the latest developments of aerial discipline the Air Force operating at Gallipoli. The struggle between the Navy and the Army for control was being fiercely waged, and Colonel Sykes, who had raised and commanded the Military Wing of the Royal Flying Corps, had to suffer a sea-change from an Hussar to become at the same time a Colonel of the Royal Marines and a Wing Captain of the Royal Naval Air Service, in order to command the air force out here. I met him in a trawler and was much impressed by his uniform, which was the first I had seen of that fencer's jacket of the Royal Flying Corps. He was under no illusion about the difficulty

*H. E. Major-General Sir Frederick Sykes, G.C.I.E., G.B.E., K.C.B., C.M.G., Governor of Bombay.

of the task before him. I remember thinking that his appearance in that Tenedos mess-tent would be like the appearance of an Academician in the middle of a party at a Chelsea studio. I only spent a few hours with Colonel Sykes; but the memory of our talk remains with me like the memory of talks with distinguished scholars whom one has caught in a happy moment of expansiveness, and the figure of that grave and courtly Hussar sitting opposite to me in the rolling trawler remains one of the most impressive I met during the war. In hardly three years he had created a tradition for the Royal Flying Corps, and I wondered if he would be able to impose it on his new command. Or would he seem already too much a creature of the conventional past to influence the wayward gallantry of those young men to whom the present was everything, hedged round so securely, as they must have fancied themselves, by death from the past or future?

Captain Loring and I stayed on to dinner at the Aerodrome. There was a crimson sunset, into the dying hues of which behind the long wave line of Imbros, twenty miles away across a pigeon-throated sea, the light of the full moon came streaming in a crystalline flood from Asia through the violet dusk. Then we turned to watch a volcanic tree of smoke rise to obliterate the last turbid stains in the northern sky. It was the smoke of Chanak which had been set on fire by the bombardment of the *Lord Nelson*, the first battleship to venture so far since the submarine had arrived. By now the men working inside the hangars had lighted their lamps, and the great emerald tents were glowing like the luminous eyes of giant cats. We turned northward again and saw through the deepening dusk the lustreless flames of Chanak shrink and swell beneath that ever spreading tree of smoke. On the level ground which ran down before us to the beach two French aeroplanes were quivering like newly emerged moths before they made a short trial

flight; and a little white dog, looking so very little in all that grandeur of colour and line and atmosphere, was growling excitably to himself as he worried a ball of cotton-wool.

"The last inhabitant of Nieuport," said Samson, pointing to him. "I brought the little beggar out with me when we had to clear."

I must have been bewitched by the fancy of that small dog's adventures, for I asked Samson if he would take me with him on his next bombing-raid over Constantinople, though I cannot pretend that I was much disappointed when he refused.

We enjoyed a good dinner with all those delightful Ariels of this enchanted island, and indeed to me they really were like beings of another world, so remote did they seem, thus beheld in a company, from even the topsy-turvy humanity of war, so much nearer to the mythical humanity a poet might dream of to inhabit the distant future. It was close on eleven o'clock when we started for home in the fragrant moonlight. Captain Loring proposed a race over the last mile, and a wonderful race it was with the dogs barking at our ponies' heels and the grillos shrilling far and wide across that moon-drenched island. The most wonderful thing about the race was that I, being full of port and wine of the country, actually won it.

The next day Thompson and I rowed round to the side of Tenedos which looked over Troy and discussed the possibility of landing irregulars to knock out that pestilential gun. It appeared so easy to row across and wander freely anywhere among those lush plains of sedge and iris and tall plumed grasses, so remote from any thought of modern war was that classic scene, so calm was it with summer. As for me I forgot for a few moments all about the gun and fell to weaving shapes out of the haze that flickered over the wide green hollow land of Troy. I was

thinking that Diomed and Odysseus might have stared across the water like this and discussed the kind of expedition that Thompson and I were planning. One could not get away from the past out here; even from a trench somebody had turned up a small marble Aphrodite a week or two since. But one could not get away from the present any more easily, and it was agreed that Thompson should try to recruit a band of ruffians and that next week I should return with the necessary authorization and cash to proceed.

When we got back to the town I met one of the greater comic characters I have encountered in my life, a man not unworthy to stand even beside Panurge, could I but draw him with the Master's hand. Aubrey Herbert in *Mons, Anzac and Kut*, which from some incomprehensible dullness of perception has never been acclaimed as one of the very best books about the war in any language, thus summarizes, under the pseudonym of Avani, the career of Vedova: '*He was a poet and a clairvoyant, a mesmerist and a masseur, a specialist in rheumatism and the science of detection, once a member of General Chermside's gendarmerie in Crete, and ex-chief of the Smyrna Fire Brigade.*'

My own first impression of Vedova* was that a Chinese conjurer had disguised himself in a soiled white uniform of the Royal Navy to give an entertainment.

"Can I speak to you, Major?" he asked in his fluent Levantine English, at the same time saluting obsequiously and evidently trying to mesmerize me with his globular protruding, oddly-lighted pale blue eyes.

"You can, though I'm not a Major."

"No, Major!"

I noticed that Thompson was showing signs of impatience at Vedova's obtrusiveness.

"If you please, Lieutenant Thompson," the conjurer insisted conveying somehow, as outwardly obsequious he

* Pronounced Védova.

stood there with his long thin drooping moustaches, his high Mongolian cheek-bones and sallow countenance, that he had only to make a few passes and Thompson himself would prove to be on this globe as temporary as the lieutenancy he held in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. "It is about this spying in Tenedos, Major," he said fiercely, his pupils dilating and contracting as he gabbled on.

"I'm not a Major."

"No, Major, but this spying is terrible. I've found out so much here that I'm quite sick with worrying which I must arrest first."

"It's not your place to arrest anybody," Thompson put in gruffly.

"That's all right, Mr. Thompson, I don't forget I was a friend for your father. Well, Major . . ."

"I'm not. . . ."

"No, Major As I am telling you, first there is this damn German spy hidden in the house of Hamdi Bey. Near the old baths they call it. το πάλαιον λουτρόν in the Greek. I think you speak Greek very well ? "

"Look here, Vedova . . ." Thompson tried again.

"If you please, Mr. Thompson. . . ." Vedova insisted, pushing him aside with the gesture of a conjurer who cannot afford to have his best trick spoilt by a stupid interruption. "We are now in this bloody war, I think. Then please to be serious. This damn German spy, Major. . . ."

"I'm . . ."

"No, Major. This damn German spy is dressed like a Turkish woman. So what must I do ? If I break the house, he can fly to the harem. Now, Major, I want your authorities to put my pistol to the heads of all the lot."

"Look here, Vedova," said Thompson with considerable heat. "Do you mind keeping your suggestions to yourself until they're asked for ? "

"Mr. Thompson, when I was head of the fire brigade in

Smyrna, who was always the first to every fire ? I do not want to blow myself out to be big. I want no more than common justice, Mr. Thompson. You say to me, 'Vedova, the Germans are landing in Tenedos,' who will be the first, I bet you, to push them away ? You know as well as I am knowing myself."

Thompson's naval uniform was comfortably loose, but he was swelling so much with indignation at Vedova that I began to fear for his buttons, and telling the ex-chief of the Smyrna fire brigade that I would see him later I relaxed the tension.

"I can't stand that fellow," Thompson growled.

"But what's he doing in naval uniform ? "

"I don't know. He apparently got hold of it when he was acting as a naval interpreter for a while. He's a perfect nuisance here. Only last week he broke into the Mufti's house, chased a man inside with a pistol until he collapsed in terror, then sat on his head, and had the impudence to tell me afterwards that the man must have been guilty or his heart would not have been beating so fast."

At this moment a big swarthy fellow strolled up and said something in a low voice to Thompson.

"This is Manoli," he told me.

I looked with interest at the newcomer, for in my notebook I had the copy of the telegram from Athens denouncing him as untrustworthy. Manoli* was a Serbian, whose real name ending in 'wich' does not matter. We knew him as Manoli ; and Aubrey Herbert calls him Anatasio. He had been involved, I fancy, in the anti-Austrian plotting that was continually going on before the war. He was innocent, however, of any connection with the Sarajevo assassination, for when that happened he was in prison in Cattaro, whence he had escaped in the Autumn of 1914.

As soon as Thompson and I were alone again I asked him

* Pronounced Manóli.

if he was sure of Manoli's good faith and loyalty. He flushed.

"As sure as I am of my own," he declared fervently.

I did not think it fair to leave Thompson in ignorance of Manoli's denunciation, which, of course, was as vague as most of the denunciations which reached us. Thompson would hear nothing against his right-hand man, and I agreed with him that unless something more definite in the way of an accusation came along there was no reason why he should. I have read a great deal of priggish and ill-informed comment on spies, behind which there was always the suggestion that every intelligence officer in the war was a credulous ass. I should like to confront some of these superior gentlemen with even such a minor problem as Manoli. To continue to give him one's trust after a denunciation, however vague, was to gamble on one's own ability to read human character. At that date I did not realize to how much misrepresentation one might expose oneself by doing that. I was to learn my lesson before the war came to an end, and I look back now with some admiration at Thompson's outspoken faith in his man, which, I may add, was completely justified.

When the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force was launched a hasty contre-espionage organization had been raked together under a man whom I will refer to as X—. He was to run a series of canteens as a cover for his activities and he had been highly recommended to Deedes by V in Athens. No sooner was the organization in full working order than a telegram arrived to say that X— was suspect. There was nothing to do but arrest him and intern him in Malta for the duration of the war. It was an unsatisfactory business, because if X— was suspect, then equally suspect were all his sub-agents, some of whom had been at once expelled from the Area of Operations. X— was deported before my arrival, so I never had an opportunity of seeing

him; but the echoes of his case resounded through the months ahead, and when I was in Athens I was continually being faced by problems arising from it. My own opinion is that he was denounced by a jealous rival who hoped if not to supplant him in the lucrative business of running canteens, at any rate to prevent X— himself from enjoying it. One of his associates was the man whom I had been told to bring back with me to Imbros for examination. As a matter of fact he did not turn up while I was in Tenedos; but if he had, my adventure would have been a dull one, for he was only too anxious to have his character cleared by a visit to G.H.Q. Unfortunately that was just what it was impossible to get done under these vague denunciations, and it ended in poor A——, who was a naval interpreter of many years' standing, being expelled from the Area of Operations.

Amid all this backwash from the X—— business, further details of which it would be tedious to inflict on the reader, there came from Athens a denunciation of the Vassilaki family now resident on Tenedos. Their case is typical of many, and as it kept several of us amused for a month I shall treat it in some detail. Chapter One begins to-day with the signalling on to Tenedos of a telegram from Athens to G.H.Q.:

*Agent reports that Vassilaki Xenaki, his two sons and three daughters now at Tenedos (group undecipherable) are German agents. No absolute proof is forthcoming here.*

Thompson's eyes sparkled when he heard this. He had already noted the existence of a Vassilaki family which was obviously to be identified with the people mentioned in the telegram, and he had already contemplated that existence with a question at the back of his mind. It was agreed that he should pursue inquiries and report the results to me when I came back to Tenedos next week.

That afternoon one of the new drifters came into the harbour, and after inspecting her equipment we began to feel that submarines would not have much longer to live out here. Among other things she carried a hydrophone through which she listened as in a stethoscope to noises under the sea, so sensitive an apparatus that the listener might hear a lobster cough. The only thing against it was that, though it could detect a submarine at a distance of several miles, it detected at the same time the screws of every vessel within radius, so that hunting a submarine with a hydrophone would be like hunting a taxicab by the sound of its wheels among the motor-buses of Piccadilly. Besides the hydrophone I was to see on that drifter for the first time the green glass balls that supported the anti-submarine nets. And to this day those green glass balls are washed ashore almost every week on my islands in the Minch, while even on Jethou we often find them. We saw too on the drifter the Mark One type of depth-charge which was, I have always understood, considerably more dangerous to the hunter than his prey. Soon after this Mark One depth-charges went into cold storage at Mudros, and they were not disturbed until the spring of 1917, when I was presented with a couple to protect us on the armed yacht *Aulis*. Remembering what I had been told about their behaviour, I at once locked them up in the cellaret of the deck smoking-cabin together with some hammer-bombs loaded with T.N.T. which were considered a quick and certain death for anybody who tried to throw them at a submarine. Then I put the key of the cellaret in my pocket for the remainder of the war and slept comfortably again.

That afternoon I left Tenedos in a trawler to return to Imbros, carrying away with me as spoils a sack of potatoes and fifty pounds of honey which I intended to offer the Mess at Army Corps Headquarters whose hospitality I had so greatly enjoyed.

Of the journey back I have no memories except of sitting on a hot deck while we rolled in the tarnished silver swell off Helles and listening to one of the crew at rest in the fo'castle as he chanted lugubriously over and over again the following ditty :

*" I'll meet you, I'll meet you*
*On a dark and stormy night,*
*Yes, I'll meet you, I'll meet you*
*On a dark and stormy night.*
*There'll be damson jam*
*And hot cross buns*
*When I meet you on a dark and stormy night."*

Then tiring of this solemn Gregorian he sang *Tipperary* which he ended :

*" Good-bye, pickled onions !*
*Farewell, cheese and beer !*
*It's a long long way to Tipperary,*
*But we're not downhearted yet."*

" He's quite happy, Darwin," I observed to my batman.

" Yes, sir, but it's a pity he can't seem to get hold of the right words somehow," said Darwin with a puzzled sigh.

## CHAPTER XII

### SHELLS

I WAS on board the Helles trawler by half-past six next morning, for I had secured the job of carrying some despatches to the Royal Naval Division and also to Army Corps Headquarters where I was anxious to present those potatoes and honey to the Mess.

Ashmead-Bartlett was on board, full of the site he had chosen for his tent on Imbros where he boasted that he could command shade at any hour of the day. He spoke with acidulous scorn of the site the General Staff had chosen for themselves on that sandy promontory. There is no doubt that his own position was far more comfortable and convenient; but I have already indicated the motives which led to the choice of the less suitable site. Anyway, the level ground on the outskirts of the squalid little village on the inland side of the soft seaweed-matted two miles of sand that was called K beach was now being used as a much-needed rest camp for the weary fighting men, so that there would have been no room there for G.H.Q. A couple of steamers had been sunk to make a pier, and there was now a cosy little harbour where men could be landed even when the wind was blowing into the roadstead of Kephalo.

While I was listening to Bartlett talking about his tent and gloating over the probable dissolution of G.H.Q. by the July and August heats, I could not help likening this survivor of the *Majestic* to the original Jonah who went and sat on the east side of Nineveh, and there made him a booth

and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what became of the city. And I fear I hoped that God would prepare another worm to smite Bartlett's shady gourd of which he was so cocky. I ran into him again after we landed, and he offered, if we could find a couple of horses, to accompany me to Divisional Headquarters with my despatches. I told him nothing would induce me to ride while I could possibly walk. So he walked along beside me, grumbling at the heat. He had been much gratified by his reception in London, where the Newspaper Proprietors had received him in conclave presided over by Lord Burnham and solemnly thanked him for his services to Fleet Street at the Dardanelles.

"I was rather taken aback at first when I walked into the room at the *Daily Telegraph* editorial offices and found a large number of grave gentlemen sitting round a table. But they were very kind to me."

"Were they really?"

"Yes, it was rather a change from the way I'm treated out here by the Staff."

He went on to say that he hoped his visit to London would have convinced the authorities what a set of incompetent jealous self-seekers were in control at Gallipoli.

"I'm sure you did your best to convince them."

"Well, I think I managed to open their eyes a bit to what's going on."

And then, of course, he produced his King Charles's head, which was the landing at Bulair. He rasped on and on about Bulair until I began to feel that it would almost be worth landing at Bulair merely to stop Bartlett's talking about it any more. Mr. Dick was upward of ten years endeavouring to keep King Charles the First out of his memorial to the Lord Chancellor, and Bartlett was upward of fourteen years trying to keep Bulair out of his memorial to Gallipoli. But by the end of *The Uncensored Dardanelles*

Bulair seems more like King Charles's head than ever, so neatly does Bartlett sever the neck of the Peninsula with a paper-knife.

I think I must have begun to wilt under the strain of listening to Bartlett's dash for Constantinople by way of Bulair, for he looked at me a moment and then said I must not be upset by his coming back. He assured me that so far as he was concerned I was welcome to his job provided I could square matters with the Newspaper Proprietors who were feeling a little sore at Hamilton's treatment of them. Here I broke in hastily to insist that only on Sir Ian's orders would I have ventured to take his place, since I was too well aware how little I knew about strategy or tactics. I added I had done my best to avoid being appointed Official Eye-witness.

"I shouldn't have minded," Bartlett interposed contemptuously.

"I'm afraid I wasn't bothering about you, Bartlett, I was only thinking about myself."

"In any case," he continued, with a suggestion that he was putting me on to a good thing, did I care to avail myself of the tip, "I don't think I shall stay out here much longer. It's pretty clear that the whole show is a wash out. I saw Hughes Massie, my agent, when I was in town, and he's sure he can get me an offer from America for a book about the Dardanelles. A thousand pounds advance on a straight twenty-five per cent. Not too bad, eh ? Hamilton and Braithwaite can stop my book in England of course, but they won't be able to stop it in America, and I'll go over there to write it if necessary."

I do not guarantee every preposition and conjunction in the above speech to have been actually uttered by Ashmead-Bartlett ; but I do guarantee the substantives and verbs. However, he must have thought better of it, for the world had to wait until 1928 for *The Uncensored Dardanelles*.

Presently Bartlett decided that it was too hot to walk any farther and turned back toward the beach in the hope of convincing somebody else that we must land at Bulair. I walked on toward Divisional Headquarters alone; but I could not stay to lunch, because I still had my despatches to deliver at Army Corps Headquarters. On my way there the shrapnel started, but I was not in the mood to be frightened by it, and it was only when I reached General Hunter-Weston's camp that I began to feel some qualms. There was not a living creature in sight. Evidently a bombardment by that infernal Asiatic gun was expected. I waited embarrassed by the silence and emptiness and wondered, with a perceptibly increasing woolliness about my knees, which way to turn for cover. I resolved that it should not be for want of trying on my part if I failed to organize that cutting out expedition by irregulars, were I spared to return to Tenedos. And then, just as I was preparing to dive into the first hole I could find and escape from those big shells, the head of Carter rose very slowly and very cautiously from the ground almost at my feet. Save that his countenance was as always cheerful and ruddy he might have been a figure in Dante's *Inferno*.

"Oh, it's you, Mackenzie!" he exclaimed. "We thought it was Ashmead-Bartlett, and we didn't want to ask him to lunch."

He shouted jovially, and from other dug-outs all round emerged the relieved faces of the Army Corps Staff.

That day I ate the best lunch I had eaten since I left Capri. General Bailloud, commanding the First French Division, was the guest of honour. The bald-headed old veteran was in splendid form and more like a Punchinello than ever. He was wearing a white tunic with rows of medals hanging from blue and green ribbons and the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour. Hunter-Bunter blew across the

table at him boisterous gusts of Anglo-French, and we even had iced cocktails.

"*Mais il est merveilleux, ce bon Cartair*," General Bailloud declared, raising his glass to the beaming A.D.C.

"Where did you get the ice, Carter?" asked the General, who was as proud of his A.D.C.'s exploits in the way of catering as a sportsman of a clever retriever.

"From a hospital ship, sir," said Carter.

"Splendid! Capital!" Hunter-Bunter shouted. "*Vous avez compris, mon général?*"

"*Oui, oui*," cried the rosy old Punchinello, rubbing his shiny nose and shaking his medals like bells.

It was a good lunch.

Alas, it had to be paid for, for when we got up from the table Colonel Street drew me aside.

"I've just the right little job for you," he said. "You know there's going to be a show on the left to-morrow? Well, we want an encouraging sheet for the troops to-night." He led me away to a secluded dug-out, and set me down at a table with paper, pen, ink, and a quantity of undigested small talk about Turkey.

"Just enough to fill a page of the multigraph," he murmured. And God forgive me, this is what I wrote:

HOW THE TURKS ARE GETTING ON

All prisoners taken recently tell the same story, that the Turks are getting more and more depressed. The Peninsula is now known amongst them as 'The Slaughter House' as all their finest regiments have been brought against us one after another and have had to go back with heavy losses.

The other day, twenty Turkish officers refused to go forward. They were arrested and sent to Constantinople where they were paraded through the streets in handcuffs. One of them shouted out to some soldiers passing, "Don't go, it's hell." They put a muzzle on him and led him on—to be shot.

One young Turk who was captured told us that when he was saying good-bye to his grandfather, the old man said to him " My grandson, you will never come back. We are fighting against the English, and the English are the whales of the sea. I fought side by side with them in the Crimea and I know them. You will never come back." The fellows that come out and snipe in front of their trenches are Bashi-Bazouks—wild devils who don't mind if they get killed or not. This is lucky for them as they mostly do. The other day, a Bisley King's Prizeman was in one of our trenches in which men were getting sniped from a flank and no one could see where the shots came from. At last he spotted the head of the fellow just showing and shot him between the eyes, which was a better bull's-eye than he ever made at Bisley.

A large number of the Turks in the trenches now are villagers and refugees who have had about a month's training. Quite lately a young Turkish recruit shot two men in his trench. They took his rifle away, but he meant no harm—just didn't know the proper use of the trigger.

Early this month, when one of our submarines blew up a transport about where Westminster Bridge would be if Constantinople were London, there was a tremendous scare, and the harbour guards fired at bubbles in the water, but our submarine came out and another has now taken its place.

The Turks sent us a proclamation the other day, by a German aeroplane, saying that all our efforts to advance had come to failure and that we are exposed to certain perdition by starvation and thirst. Yet we still take their trenches and they demand that their supply officers shall be court-martialled.

A short time ago, we captured a letter addressed to 'The Deserter Doctors of the 56th Regiment' who apparently refused to come to the front and had made away with all the medical stores. The troops in front sent an armed guard to fetch them up at the point of the bayonet.

Every trench we take off them now means a blow at Germany, for already they are beginning to curse the German officer and the day that they started to fight us for the sake of Germany. Every yard we gain here is worth a hundred in France where our fellows are fighting so mag-

nificently, and the Germans know it, but they can't prevent it here, and the gain of ACHI BABA to us would be like the gain of CALAIS to them, only we are going to get there—and they aren't.

27. 6. 15.

It is difficult to believe that any troops could derive the least encouragement from such twaddle as this, and to me almost the saddest thing about this lamentable sheet is that many of the troops probably did find it a tonic. It affords an insight into the state of mind set up by modern war, and for that reason I reproduce the drivel exactly as it was distributed later that evening from the multigraph machine. It does not differ in kind from the balderdash which all over the world was served out to the public by the leaders of every combatant nation from the day war was declared. Yet the author of what seems such a pitiable exhibition of *fausse bonhomie* must protest, even at the risk of being set down as a fool rather than a knave, that, when he toiled away in a fly-cursed dug-out through a hot June afternoon to evolve this sheet from the reports of prisoners, he honestly believed he was being useful and, what is more, he sincerely hoped that his lucubrations were not far from the truth.

After reading that 'encouraging sheet' the reader may well ask what right I have to imply a condemnation of Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett's attitude toward the Gallipoli operations. I can only reply I believed from the beginning of the war that it was our best policy to attack Constantinople, that it was necessary for the future peace and decency of Europe to drive every Turk back into Asia, and that if we could but hang on at Gallipoli long enough the people at home would be converted to a comprehension of the supreme importance of our enterprise. The troops were already beginning to murmur, because they did not grasp what

success at Gallipoli would mean. Troops in the field are not in a fit state of mind to absorb lectures on politics. It would have been twenty times easier and more amusing to prepare a brief exposition of our aims in attacking Constantinople; but nobody would have read it, whereas the wretched drug I dispensed that afternoon was swallowed without difficulty.

I was much struck the other day when George Blake* asked me indignantly why the Fifty-second Division was sent almost straight into action after landing, without a month's preliminary training at Gallipoli. If a very intelligent man like George Blake is capable of asking such a question about that campaign in which he took an active and gallant part, I may be forgiven for supposing that the potted nonsense I groaned out that stifling afternoon was as much as could be digested by the troops. The best cure for mental superiority about the War is to cast our minds back to the first week of it and try to remember with shame the rubbish we all at that early date gobbled up like greedy ducks. The quicker the mind, the more rapid the assimilation of fact and the excretion of waste matter; but in the first mad rush of credulity our philosophers stuffed themselves just as full of garbage as the man in the street. Emotional hunger has always to be satisfied before reason begins to function normally again.

I am reading at night as I write this chapter the first volume of Cecil Aspinall's Official History of the Military Operations at Gallipoli, and my mind turns to that indomitable Commander-in-Chief sitting in his little tent at Kephalo and writing in a letter that afternoon of the twenty-seventh of June:

*From my individual point of view a hideous mistake has been made on the correspondence side of the whole of this*

*The Scottish novelist.

*Dardanelles business. Had we a dozen good newspaper correspondents here, the vital life-giving interest of these stupendous proceedings would have been brought right into the hearths and homes of the humblest people in Britain . . .*

*As for information to the enemy, this is too puerile altogether. The things these fellows produce are all read and checked by competent General Staff Officers. To think that it matters to the Turks whether a certain trench was taken by the 7th Royal Scots or the 3rd Warwicks is just really like children playing at secrets. The Censors who are by way of keeping everyone in England in darkness allow extremely accurate panoramas of the Australian position from the back trenches, communication tracks, etc., all to scale; a true military sketch, to appear in the Illustrated London News of 5th June. The wildest indiscretion in words could not equal this.**

Could we indeed have had these correspondents! half a dozen Nevinsons for example, who would have apprehended the meaning of the drama that was being played and each linked action of which is so lucidly set out in Aspinall's pages fourteen years later. And had we had them, could they but have been granted the eloquence to persuade Government, Press, and Public to regard the success of the military operations at Gallipoli as vital to the ending of the War in the right way!

The battle on the left which ended in the capture of the Boomerang Redoubt was the high-water mark of our success at Gallipoli; but the only memory I have of it is the sight of our men going forward, the metal discs which had been fixed on their backs to guide the gunfire flashing and winking like the summer sea at noontide. The big guns on

* From "Gallipoli Diary" by General Sir Ian Hamilton, G.C.B. (London Edward Arnold & Co.), by permission.

the Asiatic side put over thirty-five shells in an attempt to knock out one of our 60-pounders. I read in an old letter that two poor chaps and about thirty horses were blown to pieces and that when the shells began to fall among us we went down to a jolly good lunch; but the memory of where I ate it or who our hosts were has completely faded. There are moments when I wish that I had kept a proper diary, and yet if I had I should probably have been tempted to overload this book. Some days have remained clear in my mind from dawn to eve; others, often filled with events instead of trivial incidents, have passed like a brief landscape beheld from the windows of a train.

I was over again at Helles two days later on the thirtieth of June, and lunched with General Gouraud in the old fort at Sedd-el-Bahr. That was the last time I was to see the General at Gallipoli, for the next day one of those shells from Asia threw him over a seven-foot wall and smashed his arm and thigh. He had just strolled out to speak to somebody outside G.Q.G. A piece of the shell fell on the table of the Mess. The picture of him waving good-bye to us after lunch two days earlier from the door of G.Q.G. is curiously associated in my mind with another picture of many years earlier. In the summer of 1900 I was staying with an aunt at her house in France, and I found myself walking after dinner in a peach-orchard with a French Artillery Captain. It was the time of the Dreyfus Affair, and after we had discussed for a while the equivalents in French slang of various English slang words—I remember we speculated whether '*rupin*' and 'ripping' could be connected etymologically—I declared my belief in the guilt of Dreyfus, probably, as a seventeen-year old boy might, in the hope of impressing a foreigner with his continental outlook. The young Artillery officer turned sharply round on me, glared at me through his pince-nez, and told me I did not know what I was talking about. He

declared that the Dreyfus Affair would be the ruin of his country.

"Look at me," he declared passionately. "Because I am known to sympathize with the Dreyfusards my military career is ruined. I have been ordered to Cochin-China. That will be the end of me."

I see him now staring eastward across the peach-trees all rosy in the sunset, an expression of utter despair in his eyes.

But he was too pessimistic, for that young Artillery officer's career was not ruined. He became General Dégoutte and commanded the Army of the Rhine eighteen years later.

But to return to General Gouraud, the picture of whom standing in the doorway of the old fort at Sedd-el-Bahr is coupled in my fancy with General Dégoutte in that peach-orchard of the Lyonnais. He survived the loss of his arm; but it was a bad day for the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force when he became a casualty, and a bad day for Europe. General Bailloud succeeded him in command for the time being, and, good company though that bald-headed old Punchinello was at lunch, he was turning into a pessimist over the military situation, or perhaps he hoped from the appointment of General Sarrail to succeed General Gouraud a relatively greater importance for the French part in Near Eastern operations. We might consider General Bailloud to be the first performer in what King Constantine called the Salonica Circus.

It was partly due to signs of a growing desire on the French side to take independent action out here that I was sent back to Tenedos on the first of July. We had received news that they were fitting out a corps of irregulars to attack the Asiatic guns, and it was my business to urge as tactfully as possible co-operation in any such enterprise. There were several other questions which required dis-

cussion with Thompson, and so with a delightful prospect ahead I found myself on board the trawler which left early in the morning for Tenedos, calling at Anzac and Helles on the way. It was quiet off Anzac, for there was no shrapnel as usual. However, when we had ploughed along through the southerly swell for about a mile a gun opened on the trawler from an olive-grove that ran down between a wide break in the cliffs to a yellow beach. The first fountain spurted up about three hundred yards away on our port beam. I was up on the bridge with the old Lowestoft skipper who turned to me and said :

" They've seen your helmet, sir. It's a game of theirs to have a shot like that when they think we're taking anybody important to Helles."

Before I had time to blush, there was a sharp sigh somewhere overhead and another fountain appeared about a hundred yards nearer. I tried to convey my lack of concern and carefully examined the olive-grove through my glasses. Five more fountains spouted, each one a few yards nearer to the trawler and finally a shell plumped into the sea with a great splash scarcely twenty yards away. I found that the view of the olive-grove through my glasses was beginning to jump up and down and that I was whistling to myself a silly tune through my teeth.

" The next one gets us," the skipper muttered, and he spat with slow precision on a match-stump between his toes as if to show how easy it was to hit a much smaller object than we were.

" Why not go hard a-port ? " I suggested. " They'll be sure to calculate on our going to starboard."

The skipper put the helm hard down. A shell screamed over, and burst ten yards to starboard, the spray of its fountain blown back over us by the south wind.

" I wonder how much each of those shells costs ? " I asked.

"Couldn't say at all," said the skipper.

"About ten pounds at least, I suppose."

"I wouldn't be surprised."

"Well, they've wasted ninety pounds on me so far."

Perhaps the same thought struck the Turkish gunners in the olive-grove, for no more shells were fired, and we rolled on to Helles without further disturbance.

The sensation of being shelled in a small vessel is definitely unpleasant. The deck of a trawler is not as sympathetic as the earth, and this particular deck was less sympathetic than most, being the promenade of four dogs and two cats. I simply could not have thrown myself down upon it, as I could throw myself down on mother earth and seize her by the hair for comfort. Moreover, in this case the knowledge that the enemy was deliberately concentrating upon the extinction of myself had made it seem as certain that I should be hit as it was certain that the skipper could hit that match-stump whenever he spat. But here is a strange thing. On an occasion later on in the war when I had an opportunity of being fired at in my armed yacht *Aulis*, between Chios and the mainland, I deliberately took advantage of it and enjoyed the experience as one enjoys riding on a switchback.

It was a sweltering day of sticky south wind, and when we anchored off Helles to wait for the mails the oily swell made me feel sick. Presently the Asiatic guns opened on the beach. I saw four tents by the Signal Station blown to pieces, and then a shell burst in the middle of the Field Ambulance.

"Why the deuce don't they send a picket-boat out with the mail?" I grumbled, for by now the shells had begun to fall among the shipping. I wondered if I had escaped the gun in the olive-grove only to succumb here because fate had decided that I was to be killed to-day in a trawler. The air was full of screams, as shell after shell burst all

round us, the smaller craft bucking at anchor in the swell like scared mules.

"Make a signal to the beach that unless a picket-boat comes out with the mail at once you are going on to Tenedos without taking it."

"Well, but where's my authority?" the old skipper demurred.

"I'll take the responsibility."

The skipper shook his head doubtfully, but he made the signal, and an evidently infuriated mail officer signalled back that we were to stay where we were until the mail was ready. More shells fell.

"Signal," I told the skipper firmly, "that an officer from G.H.Q. is on board, who has important business in Tenedos and that he cannot wait while they finish writing their letters on the beach."

My bluff succeeded. A picket-boat came out to us, from the stern of which an indignant sub-lieutenant started to inquire what the hell the skipper meant by trying to tell Captain Somebody what time the mail was to come off.

"Let me answer," I said to the equally indignant, yet withal nervous skipper. And with this I looked out from the bridge and shouted down to know what the hell Captain Somebody meant by not having the mail ready at the scheduled time.

"Who the hell are you, sir?" came up from the picket-boat.

"Never mind who the hell I am. Why the hell don't you get those blasted mail-bags on board? This trawler isn't Captain Somebody's private yacht."

A fountain near the picket-boat put an end to the argument. The mail-bags were flung on board, and the trawler got under way.

"I hope there won't be trouble about this little barney," the skipper muttered to himself.

I wrote him a chit to say I accepted full responsibility for insisting that the mail-bags should be brought out at the scheduled time. However, I heard no more about the brief fuss. It was one of those acutely irritating mornings of south wind when everybody's nerves are on edge and when heavy shelling from big guns does not tend to soothe them.

## CHAPTER XIII

### TENEDOS FOR THE THIRD TIME

WITH affectionate gratitude to the genius of the place I stepped ashore on the island of Tenedos for the third time. In a moment the War was miles away, though when I looked up to the shimmering windmills on the slope behind the red-roofed town there were shadows of it here, for I could see beside them Moslem women in black sitting with bowed heads and pondering a hopeless future.

That afternoon the Governor and I rode over to the Marines' camp on the Asiatic side of the island where trenches had been dug to resist a sudden foray by the enemy. And here to my immense gratification I managed at last to secure some badges of my Corps, though, alas, none of the coveted buttons, for there was not a spare button in the camp. We had a jolly tea with the Doctor and then rode inland to visit the Mayor who lived in a delightful ancient house surrounded by a large garden full of flowers. We sat in an arbour of myrtle and honeysuckle and drank a very old sweet wine of the country, while the Mayor's pretty niece brought us bunches of damask roses crimson-pied and rapturously fragrant. She brought us musk roses, too, the colour of old ivory, and scattered aromatic herbs on the ground for our feet. To loiter there in the honied calm of early evening and look back from that perfumed arbour to the adventures of the morning with shells and the hot stale deck of a trawler in a rolling southerly

sea was to believe either that I was dreaming now or that I had been dreaming then, but that not both experiences could be real. We sat there laughing and joking with the Mayor for a long time, and it was not until the first orange streamers of the sunset began to float across the tender evening sky that we said farewell. Then we rode off home into the spangled air through which high overhead a monoplane was thrumming round and round in lazy circles, its wings glittering like a buzzard's. While we were trotting along between high green banks a motor-bicycle swept round a corner in front with one of the French aerodrome mechanics in the saddle. My pony shot sideways into a ditch, stood on his hindlegs, pawed the bank for a moment or two, and then made an attempt to climb it. I can hear the echoes of my companion's laughter now. However, I managed to keep my seat, and induce the absurd animal to believe that it was less likely to be damaged on four legs than if it remained on two. Soon afterward we reached the starting-point of our mile race and galloped past green banks and Turkish tombstones to reach the outskirts of the town in a dead heat. The wake of our course was marked by a trail of rose-leaves scattered from the bunches we had tied to our saddles.

After dinner I sat downstairs and by the light of one guttering candle tried to reach an arrangement about the proposed expedition to cut out the Asiatic guns. On one side of the table sat a Franco-Polish *sous-lieutenant* of the Eleventh Regiment, his uniform glowing richly in the dim light. I had tilted my chair back into the shadows on the other side, while Thompson leaned forward on his elbows at the end of the table, his clear-cut features and square chin flickering behind the wavy candle-flame as he harangued in Greek five black-avised cut-throats sitting in a row on a bench along the cracked plaster of the wall opposite.

"They won't move for less than ten pounds a head payable in advance," Thompson announced.

"They shall not have more than five pounds a head and only that when they come back; but," I added, with a bow to the Frenchman as the five cut-throats rose together in excited indignation at the lowness of my offer, "I suggest to our friend that if these men bring back information that will enable our ships to knock out the gun nearest here we will give them a hundred pounds, half to be paid by us and half by the French."

The *sous-lieutenant* accepted this proposal on behalf of our Allies; and then the argument began again with the cut-throats. Finally, after an hour or more of bargaining I dismissed them and said that I could find plenty of starving Turks on Tenedos to do the job more efficiently. The fact was Thompson had warned me before the interview that from inquiries he had been making the men were no use, and since it would do more harm than good to employ untrustworthy men in such an enterprise I was anxious to be quit of them. The *sous-lieutenant*, however, assured me that the five men were absolutely reliable, and so in the end I drew up the following conditions, a copy of which is still in my old japanned-tin box, wretchedly typed out on a scrap of paper much blurred by salt water.

1. He was to use the five men.
2. The men were to get one pound a head before starting.
3. In the event of their giving us information which would lead to the knocking out of the Asiatic gun, the men were to receive one hundred pounds to be shared by the English and French Intelligence funds. But this hundred pounds was not to be paid over until the gun had been successfully knocked out.
4. That if the men failed to get any information they should receive when they came back not more than

five pounds a head. But that the expense of this was to be borne by the French alone and also the preliminary pound a head.

5. The expenses of the boat to land them was to be shared by the English and French Intelligence funds.
6. That we agreed to share in the expenses of this expedition up to a certain point only if we had an agreement that for the future all 'pushes' should be referred to us for our co-operation and advice.

The French representative accepted this arrangement, and some time afterward the attempt was made. The men hid all day among the great Trojan irises about fifty yards from the sea and brought back no information whatever about the gun, so I was justified of what must have seemed to the little Franco-Polish *sous-lieutenant* a hard bargain. Later on the French tried to launch a real cutting-out expedition on a much larger scale. They imported a number of Cretan and Anatolian irregulars and trained them in a pine-wood; but this expedition was no more successful than the first. Two or three hundred men instead of five spent two days and a night hiding among the irises a few yards from the shore and then were re-embarked. So the Asiatic guns continued to function until the final abandonment of our effort to open the Dardanelles.

Two nights after this Thompson and I decided to test our patrols and coast-watchers on Tenedos. We rowed round in a boat and had the dismal satisfaction of landing wherever we chose without encountering so much as a 'Bo!' from regular or irregular. However, in a secluded cove we found a caique which had been smuggling; so she was brought round to the inner harbour, there to remain in disgrace until the war was over.

Next day Captain Loring and I visited the aerodrome where I met my old friend 'Bill' Samson, an elder brother

of the Commander, who had been up with me at Magdalen. He had been pitched out of a 'plane into the sea at Mytilene and broken his ankle. So now he was to go to Malta in the *Lynn* which was expected at Tenedos to-morrow. Bill Samson and I had a good talk about the past, but I do not believe we said a word about the present. We might have been sitting in Addison's Walk, so placid was the afternoon. Old wines, old rags, old friends, they were what we talked about, sitting under the shade of a fig-tree with boughs contorted like the two snakes which came out of the sea and killed Laocoon and his sons, perhaps on that very stretch of beach just beyond our camp-chairs. Such was Pallas Athene's method of dealing with espionage, for Laocoon had tried to warn the Trojans about the Wooden Horse. Three thousand years later Athene's Athens sent us submarine cables instead of snakes.

Commander Samson invited the Governor and myself to stay to dinner, and on our protesting that he was just starting off on a raid he said casually:

"Oh, I shall be back in twenty minutes. I'm only going to drop this bomb on Yeni Keui."

Off he went with one of those hundred-pounders like an Indian club to leave his mark on the southern shore of the Asiatic side of the Straits. However, I had a candlelight conspiracy to attend that evening, and so we galloped back to Tenedos town for dinner.

Beside Thompson and Jack Higgins the Governor's Mess now included Lieutenant Y——, who in real life was one of His Britannic Majesty's Vice-Consuls in the Levant. Y—— was a source of irritation to Captain Loring, for he was suffering from an acute attack of the disease known as consulitis. The symptoms of consulitis are touchiness, swollen dignity, and an angry rash of red tape, all of which are intensely aggravated by the presence of members of the Diplomatic Corps, and to a lesser degree by officers of

the Fighting Forces. Y—— was annoyed that the Governor of Tenedos could not grasp that as a Vice-Consul he ranked with, but after, Lieutenant-Commanders and Majors, although for this campaign he had only been given the miserable rank of a Lieutenant in the Army. The Governor of Tenedos on his side did not care a damn what Y——'s rank was, theoretical or otherwise, because in his opinion Y—— himself was a pompous and aggressive little worm. It is remarkable how rude a genial man can be when he is rude, and I have seldom heard anybody quite so rude as Captain Loring was to Y——. The result of this was that Y——'s consulitis grew more and more violent, and took the uncomfortable form of self-assertion at dinner. Later on I was to come across much more severe cases of consulitis. In fact I have seen men so thickly covered from head to foot with confluent red tape as hardly to be recognizable as human beings. I doubt if there be any cure once consulitis grips a man, but a sense of the ridiculous is always a reliable prophylactic.

Thompson thought that the Governor was unfair to Y——. Jack Higgins on the other hand, who got on excellently with Thompson, thought that he was not nearly severe enough, and used to utter dark threats in which the phrase 'toe of my boot' was prominent. However, Y——'s presence did not interfere with the Governor's determination to give a dinner to the French flying people, one or two of whom were so well filled up with champagne and brandy that they were unable to sit on their ponies and had to be sent back to their aerodrome balanced face downward across them like sacks of grain. They got home all right thanks to the sagacity of their mounts, though we were a little anxious about them, for a while, because soon after their departure the stars were blotted out by cloud and a tremendous thunderstorm burst over the island.

Meanwhile, amid a quantity of minor problems of be-

haviour, the behaviour of the Vassilaki family became of absorbing interest. Here was what Thompson had to tell me. About April 25th a man called Stavro Vassilaki had arrived in Tenedos from America. Soon afterwards he had gone to see Major Temple, who was then Military Governor of the island, and had asked for a permit to bring his father, his mother, three sisters, and a brother from Volo, which is a port on the mainland of Greece, the modern name for Iolchos of the Argonauts. The request had been granted, and soon afterward the rest of his family had arrived. Stavro Vassilaki at once began to travel backward and forward between Tenedos, Mytilene, and Athens. Thompson had already warned him that he could not go on doing this and that if he were the merchant he pretended to be the telegraph and the post-office were at his service. He had applied for a pass to travel some three weeks ago, and he was then warned that this was the last time a pass would be granted, and that if he came back from Mytilene to Tenedos he would not be allowed to leave Tenedos again. He went, however, and was presumably still there. The day after Thompson had been given the warning telegram from Athens, Stavro Vassilaki's brother Yanni had asked for a permit to go to Mytilene, which had been refused. On June 27th, however, Yanni had obtained a permit to send his mother and one sister to Mytilene. I asked Thompson why this had been granted, and he suggested that if we were going to establish a case against the Vassilakis they would have to be given some rope. With this I agreed. It struck me that neither Thompson nor his confidential agent, Manoli, would stand a chance of finding out much below the surface of the Vassilaki family, and I decided to employ the services of Vedova, who had been skipping about after me like an eager grey and white goat ever since I arrived. It was well known on the island that Thompson could not stand the sight of Vedova. By the

way I have not mentioned that Vedova's first name was Wilfred, though I could never extract from him how he came by it. I decided that, if Vedova was a tenth as clever as he considered himself, he ought to be able to win a measure of confidence from Yanni Vassilaki on the strength of Thompson's known dislike of him. I relied on the warmth of my feelings for eccentric and flamboyant characters like Vedova to secure his devotion to myself.

So I sent for the ex-chief of the Smyrna fire brigade, who came to see me at the Governor's house, more like an emaciated Chinese conjurer than ever, although he was still wearing a white uniform of the Royal Naval Reserve. I was in a small room, the windows of which looked down on the narrow street crowded with noisy children at play.

"I want to speak to you about a confidential matter, Vedova."

His unexpected reply was to go down on all fours, run rapidly across the bare boards of the room in that attitude, and then raise himself to peer over the window-sill with as much caution as if an enemy were waiting for him with a revolver on the other side of the street.

"What on earth . . ." I began.

"That's all right, Major. I only look to see there is nobody to hear what we are saying."

"Well, don't play the clown, and don't call me Major. I am not a major. It is more than improbable that I ever shall be one."

"You ought to be a general," Vedova declared enthusiastically. "My god, the moment I see you come ashore I have said to myself, 'that is the cleverest man I have seen since I am working here for Great Britain.'"

"Silly talk like that does not impress me."

"No, sir, I do not wish to speak for impressions. I wish to speak for truths, so help me God!" He paused to cross himself with much devoutness, and then gabbled faster than

ever to make up for lost time. "But when I must be ignorated and degraded by a man like Mr. Thompson who is stupid like a pig and like . . ."

"Keep quiet! If I ever hear you talking like that again, I'll have nothing to do with you."

"Excuse me, sir, but sometimes my heart is so much swelling with the insults I am having put upon me here that I cannot help myself. This island is full of spies. Captain Mackenzie, it is alive with them like a blanket. But when I go to take them for the risk of my life, and which for Great Britain I will always be glad to risk, Mr. Thompson treats me with high inconvenience. When I bring to him a man I have arrested and on whose head I have risked my life to sit for half an hour, Mr. Thompson treats me like I am bringing to him a bad water-melon."

"Would you mind keeping quiet and hearing what I have to tell you?"

The ex-chief of the Smyrna fire brigade at once came rigidly to attention.

"First of all," I began, "I want you to get into conversation with Yanni Vassilaki. Try to find out why he has brought those three sisters of his to Tenedos. They are said to be good-looking, well-dressed girls, and they used to walk about freely in public, lately they have taken to remaining indoors. Why?"

"I shall mesmerize them to-morrow and tell you, Captain."

"Mesmerize them?"

Vedova, still standing rigidly to attention, began to roll his pale protruding globular eyes.

"If you go and stare at them like that," I said, "they'll probably never come out of the house again. Listen to me. You will get into conversation with Yanni Vassilaki and drop a hint that you have influence with me and that, if he ever wants a permit to travel, he has only to ask you and

you will make it your business to pull strings in his favour. Do you understand ? "

Vedova let his eyelids droop like the adventuress in a melodrama and gazed at me from the slits that remained uncovered with an expression that suggested the existence between us henceforth of a secret too deadly even to be whispered. Then he left me, and I sat by the window, wondering about the Vassilakis and, I suppose, hoping that they really were spies. Down in the street the noise of children at play had abruptly ceased. Instead I heard a queer wailing sound, and looked out to see a funeral procession approaching—the crowd of mourners, the thurifer, two long-haired bearded priests, and there lying in a lidless coffin the waxen face of the dead man among a jumble of flowers. The sight of the dead man's face gave me a shock, for I did not know then of the Greek custom of carrying the dead to burial in an open coffin, which I believe dates back to the time of the Turkish domination and the suspicion of any receptacle that might carry arms. It was strange that the funeral of one Greek who had died in his bed should be able to make such an impression on one who had seen so many dead men on the Peninsula. Yet so it was, and the waxen face of that man emerging from those flowers haunts my memory more clearly than any dead man I saw upon the field of action.

The funeral passed. The moaning and wailing died away round a corner of the narrow street. Presently there was but the sound of a bell tolling, the chattering of the jackdaws on the sunlit red roofs, and the merry noise of children who had gone back to their games. How much every place out there has its own peculiar set of sounds associated with it in my memory ! From Cape Helles I can always hear the neighing of the mules, the whinnying of the shells, and lark-song everywhere. From Tenedos I hear the jackdaws, the cries of children in the vine-trellised streets, the eternal

quarrelling of dogs, and the clock striking every hour twice over. From Imbros comes back to me the croaking of the frogs, the flap-flap of the tents day and night, and the distant growl of guns ; from Anzac the silence of the morning sun over a murmur of men like bees.

The long immunity I had enjoyed from pain (for I had only been laid out for four days since I left Capri) was broken at Tenedos by a violent attack of sciatica which kept me on a bed of agony for three or four days. Vedova forgot about his investigations into the past and present of the Vassilakis in the excitement of trying to persuade me to let him cure me by massage. It was useless to assure him that massage is the worst treatment possible for sciatica. I would drive him down from the room with curses ; but a minute or two afterward he would be peeping round the door like the clown in a Punch and Judy show. Even when Jack Higgins in his wrath rose from my bedside and kicked him downstairs, he came back soon afterward with an enormous purple bottle of liniment which he had prepared from herbs gathered for him by the inhabitants of Tenedos, many of whom he had driven out over the countryside to perform this task, threatening them with his pistol.

" I'll break that damned bottle on your head," Higgins threatened wrathfully.

" Mr. Higgins, I am telling to you that if I give my massage to Captain Mackenzie he can be riding to-morrow. Captain Mackenzie, I only ask one thing. You smell this bottle which I have made for you myself, and if you don't like the smell I am nothing."

" But massage is fatal to sciatica," I groaned.

Vedova, still bobbing about in the doorway with that purple bottle, smiled his conviction of knowing better.

" Massage by some peoples ? Yes. Massage by me . . . why, Captain Mackenzie, sir, in Smyrna there is always a crowd waiting for me in the street to massage them, and my

wife must look from the window and curse those stupids because they will not go away."

At this point Jack Higgins picked up the chair on which he had been sitting by my bed to watch with sympathetic forget-me-not blue eyes my contortions, and advanced against Vedova.

"Go and put out one of your bloody fires with that blasted bottle of yours," he said truculently.

"If you really want to be of use to my pain, Vedova," I told him, "go and get into touch with Vassilaki."

He saluted with a fantastic extravagance of gesture.

"I know my duty to Great Britain," he declared, and went off at once, skipping down the stairs like a docile grey and white goat.

My delightful doctor came back with his chair to my bedside and, taking his seat again, gazed at me compassionately. Then he tried an injection of a reputed analgesic called sedol, which had no effect.

"It's morphia you'll have to have," he said, shaking his head. "But will you just try drinking the sedol first like a good chap? Sometimes these things work better when they're drunk than when they're put in with the syringe."

So I tried sipping the sedol from a wineglass, while Jack Higgins sat with his fingers on my wrist.

"Begod, you've got a damn fine pulse for a man suffering in the way you are. It would take a pretty go of pneumonia to put you out for ever."

The spasms of pain were increasing in violence and frequency, and at last my doctor decided on morphia, for by now in spite of a steady pulse I was sweating with agony. It took nearly a grain before the anger of the nerve was allayed.

Much has been written of the joys of morphia, and I have to suppose that it gives positive pleasure to many. It takes

me by the throat with one hand and with the other it forks up my ganglia like a Neapolitan eating *spaghetti*. It drives my eyes back into my brain and gives me an overpowering nausea for many hours afterwards. It performs indeed none of those miracles of pleasure which are attributed to its magic potency save only one, and that is its sure paralysis of the most atrocious pain. I have been given a great deal of it; but I have never had even a momentary desire to take it for its own sake, and I have come coldly to the conclusion that most of the so-called morphia fiends who attribute their moral decline to the drug are liars, weaklings and degenerates who would have been liars, weaklings, and degenerates whether they had taken morphia or not. If I were set in a position to judge and condemn a fellow-man and that man pleaded addiction to drugs as an excuse for his crime I would double his sentence, because I should remember the many sufferers who have been denied alleviation of their sufferings through the beastly feebleness of brutes like him.

Jack Higgins satisfied himself that analgesics like sedol, pyramidon, phenacetin, caffeine, aspirin, and such like were useless to allay even for a moment the extreme violence of my pain, and he wrote out a note on my case for the benefit of other doctors out there who might find themselves called upon to treat me.

Vedova was reproachful when two or three days later I was about again with nothing more than a limp to mark the attack. I wonder why so many people believe in the efficacy of massage for already exacerbated nerves. However, he was not offended by my refusal to accept his services, and most people who believe in massage are mortally offended by the least dubiety over its efficacy. They seem to attribute to it a kind of sacramental value, and I believe would sooner hear Baptism derided.

Vedova had not found out much about Yanni Vassilaki.

Perhaps because Thompson had cast upon him a suspicious eye he was prejudiced in his favour. Anyway, he told me that the fellow seemed harmless, that he had come to Tenedos in the hope of doing business during the campaign, but that having been disappointed he had announced his intention of going back to America. I decided to interview Yanni Vassilaki myself, and found him a typical American-Greek, full of raucous brag about life on the other side of the Atlantic and a profound contempt for the slowness of everything and everybody in his own country. I began to talk about the situation on the Peninsula and indulged in a few harmless indiscretions of gossip; but the complacent dago showed not a glimmer of interest in what was happening a few miles away across the water. Either I had played my part badly or Yanni Vassilaki was playing his well, for he certainly gave no sort of impression that he was acting. However, the next day Vedova came prancing round to tell me that Yanni Vassilaki had just applied for a pass to allow him and his two young brothers, aged sixteen and fourteen, to peddle wares round the aerodrome. This sounded as if my apparent gullibleness had impressed him after all. I decided to encourage him in that notion, and sending for him I told him that if he could give me satisfactory references I was ready to support his request. He seemed pleased and told me that he was anxious to sell some wood at the aerodrome. So I procured him a pass and asked the Paymaster to buy wood from him when he presented himself.

Besides the Vassilaki business, the dust from the unfortunate collapse of our contre-espionage canteens was lying more and more thickly on Tenedos deposited by every boat that called there. There must have been at least half a dozen men who had been hurriedly pushed out of what they were finding such lucrative jobs on the Peninsula, not suspected of anything definite and in most cases

with characters vouched for by reputable English merchants. None of them knew anything about the deportation of X—— himself, and since that was being kept a secret they could not be told. I pointed out to Deedes that such men left to their own devices in the islands might easily become dangerous: with the grievance they had and the loss of money consequent upon their dismissal ; but Deedes, though fully recognizing this, was not in a position to have any more of them deported to Malta.

One of these fellows was particularly pertinacious, and I could not put my head outside the front door without being buttonholed by him. Pascalides was not a bad-looking little fellow with curly hair and a big nose, the kind of little fellow who would always have been at the top of his class at school and who had kept in maturity the manner of a consciously and somewhat complacently industrious scholar. At the same time with all his pertinacity he was shy and nervous, blushing painfully when the simplest question was put to him and thereby exposing himself to the suspicion of being thoroughly dishonest and surreptitious, so hardly do we learn the lesson that rogues usually simulate the traditional demeanour of honesty. Pascalides spoke and wrote English extremely well, and being impressed by his sincerity I thought it was ridiculous to get rid of him merely because the man who had originally engaged him was doubtfully suspect. So when in an interview he suggested being employed to try to penetrate the truth about X——'s loyalty, I was convinced that he meant to act straightly and promised to do my best to obtain him an interview with Captain Deedes, at which he could make his position clear. I learned from Pascalides something which was useful on several occasions during my later career, and this was that, if you showed a man who had been wrongly suspected that you really did believe in his honesty, you afterwards had him as securely devoted to

you as if you had actually intervened between him and the firing-squad. To accept a man at his own valuation when the rest of the world is inclined to regard him as a fraud is for once to be able to feel sure of human gratitude, for, whereas to lend a man money is to run the risk of making him feel inferior, to believe in a man when the world is against him is to restore his sense of equality with oneself.

The day before I left Tenedos the *Hussar* was signalled approaching, so the Governor and I walked down to the harbour to find out what her arrival at full speed portended. Captain Heneage* hurried ashore, a tall lanky man on wires, his hair as long, that morning at any rate, as a painter's or a veteran politician's.

"Come to take you away," he shouted to Captain Loring.

"Where to?"

"You've been given the *Albion*. I've brought a new governor with me, and I can give you exactly one hour to pack."

My heart sank; though I knew how glad Captain Loring himself would be to have a ship again, the announcement meant the end of a perfect little kingdom. His successor, a kindly but somewhat massive Marine colonel would be too heavy for Tino's back. It was true that I was myself returning to Imbros on the morrow; but if my present job lasted I should be visiting Tenedos again at intervals, and without Captain Loring it would never seem quite so perfect a little island.

Colonel Mullins† walked back with the departing governor to learn about the cares of office while his predecessor's kit was being packed. Meanwhile, I entertained Captain Heneage, or to be accurate I was entertained by him. He was the Commodore in command of all the small vessels in these waters, and was known as Captain K in the same way

*Admiral A. Walker-Heneage-Vivian, C.B., M.V.O., R.N.
†General G. J. H. Mullins, C.B., R.M.L.I.

as the Commodore of the destroyer flotilla was known as Captain D.

"Can you guess why I call them ketches instead of trawlers?" Captain K asked me. "Why, I'll tell you. I call them ketches so that when I'm asked for a trawler I can always reply with perfect truth that I haven't got a single one to spare."

At this he walked rapidly up and down the quay, shouting with laughter at such an ingenious device for side-tracking exigent admirals.

Poor Jack Higgins was almost in tears when he saw the *Hussar* vanish at full speed round the point headed for Mudros.

"The greatest little gentleman God ever made," he sighed with all Ireland in his brogue. "I wish I were going to be surgeon in his ship. And now you'll be off to-morrow, and I'll have to sit and listen to that blasted Y—— trying to impress on Colonel Mullins that he ranks with, but after, a lieutenant-commander and a major."

Soon after this Higgins himself was appointed to the *Ark Royal* and thus spared any further effusions of dignity from Y——'s wounded rank. And if I could be given over again any one week during the war I would choose (sciatica and all) that week on Tenedos in July, 1915.

The next day, while I was waiting on the quay for the trawler to take me to Imbros, Vedova came up and asked if I would speak to Yanni Vassilaki for a minute. I was surprised when it turned out to be a request to work for us, because this was the first sign he had given of realizing that conditions were even at all unusual on Tenedos. I told Vedova to explain to him what the work of an agent might entail; but Vassilaki interrupted him to say that he needed no explanation of that because he had already been employed as an agent by the American police. I promised I would think over his offer and held out the possibility of send-

ing him to Salonica to recruit agents for Turkey, by which he was obviously so much pleased that he at once began to brag of his prowess in New York, Vedova watching him all the while like a conjurer who has just planted the missing card in the pocket of a dupe from the audience. Thompson came along presently with the news that Stavro, the elder brother, the sister, and the mother had returned last night in the boat from Mytilene. We went over once more the hundred and one things and people I had to discuss with Deedes, and then with half a gale blowing I left Tenedos on the ninth of July.

The trawler was as lively as a dustbin in the sea that was running, and not much cleaner. I went forward and made myself as snug as I could, for the water was lolloping over amidships. On the way to Helles I studied a long letter from Pascalides which had been handed to me before I went away. I felt sure that my instinct to trust him had been right, though there was another communication from an Intelligence officer at Mudros, on whom his nervous blushes had evidently made a most unfavourable impression. Anyway, I made up my mind to persuade Deedes to have him sent over to Imbros at the first opportunity. He was certainly as likely as anybody to solve the great problem of X—— and his canteens. I gave up thinking about Vassilaki and the rest of them, and tried to read first of all Ford Madox Hueffer's *Good Soldier* and then H. G. Wells's *Boon*, which a friend had sent me. I read in the latter that Compton Mackenzie seemed in trouble about his excess luggage, and that's all I ever did read of *Boon*, for when I put the volume down beside me for a moment the ship's retriever thought it a suitable target, after which it had to be thrown overboard. Nor did I find *The Good Soldier* readable, but for that I blame the lively motion of the trawler more than the author. As a matter of fact I found all reading out there rather a bore except *Blackwood's*

*Magazine*, with a page or two of Homer or Virgil or Thucydides before going to sleep, Homer and Thucydides, alas, with the help of a crib, though I could still construe Virgil without much difficulty.

We reached the Peninsula, and while we were waiting off the beach I saw about twenty mules blown to pieces by a shell from Asia. Then we toiled on past the tawny cliffs, over which a monitor was putting 9.2 shells to land somewhere near the village of Krithia. The shipping off Cape Helles gradually faded out of sight, except the two hospital ships whose whiteness caught the westering sunshine. A destroyer went tearing past on my right, for I was sitting facing the stern, and I watched the coast of Asia through the haze of dust driving out to sea from a parched land. A depressed puppy like a Teddy bear was whimpering round the deck in a vain attempt to avoid the dollops of water which kept coming over the sides. Poor Darwin had succumbed to a bad go of dysentery, and I got up to help him rearrange the shelter he had managed to scrape together to keep the sun and sea-water from his prostrate form. The effort made me feel sick, but just as I was thinking I should have to hang over the side I was cured by the excitement of hearing the crew of a drifter shout that they had caught a submarine in their nets. There was such a blowing of sirens, and such tearing round and round that we slowed down to get some authentic news of the capture, which I thought I might have the luck to offer Sir Ian Hamilton as an evening *apéritif*. Alas, the submarine was hauled up presently, and turned out to be a dead horse. I wondered if the Vassilaki family would prove the same kind of disappointment.

I found when I reached Imbros again that the shadow of Suvla was already impending over G.H.Q.; but it was still a kindly shadow at the beginning of July, one that promised rest and refreshment with victory beyond. Suvla! The

very word rippled on the ear like the sound of running water heard by travellers at the end of a long dusty day.

It was Guy Dawnay who first told me about the proposed new landing, and it was he who first mentioned the scheme to spread a rumour in Mytilene that we were going to make an attack on Smyrna.

"That ought to be rather good fun," I exclaimed perhaps a little complacently, for I remember perfectly the expression on Guy Dawnay's face as he raised his eyebrows and turned round to Deedes to murmur with a half-mocking smile:

"I wonder why he should think *he* is ear-marked for this rather important job?"

"But who else have you got to send?" I countered.

"Well, I suppose we shall have to entrust the success of the new landing to you," he said.

Later on, when we had gone through the many minor problems raised by Tenedos, Deedes asked me if I had any ideas about the best way to create an impression that we intended to attack Smyrna. I had a number of ideas; but I did not think it would help my chance of getting to Mytilene if I appeared too full of them, so I shook my head discreetly.

"Well, this is more or less roughly my scheme," said Deedes. "You will go to Mytilene in the Thursday morning trawler and start looking about rather obviously for possible camping sites, say for three Divisions—about forty thousand troops that means. Of course, water will be the first thing you will look for. Then you might make cautious inquiries about the prospect of obtaining food locally. You might also try to engage guides for the Smyrna district, say from Menemen to Cheshme. You could go into the question of fuel also. Meanwhile, I'll tell V in Athens to send some fellows round to buy maps of the Smyrna district."

I looked a little doubtful over this last proposal.

"Deedes, I know if we really did intend to attack Smyrna we should send off in a hurry two or three weeks beforehand to buy maps of the surrounding district, and I know the Germans think we are awful fools; but I cannot believe even now they would believe us capable of being quite so foolish and casual as that. I vote against the maps."

"Very well," said Deedes in that prim way of his, "we'll rely on your powers of deception at Mytilene."

"And there's another thing," I went on. "Won't it look rather odd for a subaltern to be entrusted with the important job of choosing sites for so large a camp?"

"You can mount another pip while you're in Mytilene and call yourself a captain."

"And don't you think I ought to get hold of some R.E. badges? A Sapper certainly would be sent if this landing were a genuine operation."

"Now I think you're getting a little subtle and elaborate," said Deedes, as if he were a novice-mistress checking the raptures of a novice. "No, I don't think you need change from a Marine into an Engineer. I'll give you fifty pounds in gold. Try not to spend more than that, though if it were absolutely necessary I might be able to squeeze out a few more sovereigns."

"I think I've got more or less the hang of what to do. I suppose you'll leave the way I do it to my judgment? I mean, you don't want me to ask your authorization for every little detail?"

"No, no, no," said Deedes hastily. "I'll give you a simple cipher in which when absolutely necessary you can communicate with me. But I shall be most fearfully busy and . . ."

"The less you hear from me the better?"

"Quite."

This was satisfactory.

Instructions had been sent to Thompson at Tenedos that Pascalides was to leave there at once by the mail trawler for Imbros. I had filled Deedes with hope that an examination of him might lead to some light being thrown on the mystery of X—— and his contre-espionage canteens. On Monday, July 12th, a telegram came from Thompson to say that our man had left in the mail trawler and would arrive at Kephalo in the evening. I toiled the weary length of K beach to meet him at the Rest Camp landing-stage and arrange for his bestowal that night. But when the Tenedos trawler came in there was no sign of Pascalides. I hurried back to G.H.Q., and to hurry along these two miles and more of soft seaweed-matted beach was purgatory.

Deedes frowned when I brought him the news.

"I hope you haven't made a mistake about this fellow. He sounds a bit of a shyster."

"Much more likely they've made a mistake at Helles," I said.

We never did find out exactly what happened to Pascalides; but he was apparently pushed ashore at Lancashire Landing and spent a miserable twenty-four hours being pushed about from one place to another on the beach until at last some brighter spirit pushed him on to the trawler for Imbros the following afternoon. Anyway, we heard of his proposed despatch, and Deedes sent this signal to the Camp Commandant at K beach:

*One visitor class five who missed mail trawler yesterday will arrive K beach from Helles to-day. Please meet and arrange to send over to G.H.Q. at nine a.m. to-morrow.*

I had a lot of business to get through myself at the Rest Camp in connection with our detective work, and it was settled that I should spend the night over there and come back in the morning to G.H.Q. to help at the extrication of facts about X—— from Pascalides.

I was busy when the Helles trawler came in, and it wsa

dark before I could get an opportunity to find out where they had put our class five visitor for the night. I may explain that suspects, friends, agents, interpreters, and guides made up the classes of our visitors, and that a visitor of class five meant a suspected spy. I told Deedes at the time he sent his signal that it was rather bad luck on the wretched Pascalides to have him signalled as a suspect; but he replied that it was better to err on the right side and that as far as his night's board and lodging were concerned it would make no difference to his comfort. The point of signalling him as a suspect was that he would be watched carefully and not allowed to go wandering about the camp. Knowing that the Assistant-Provost-Marshal would have the chief say in the bestowal of Pascalides that night, I went up to his office and asked whether I could see our visitor. The Assistant-Provost-Marshal declared that he had never heard of Pascalides and that nobody answering to his description had been handed over to him.

"But look here," I protested, "this may be rather serious. We had a signal from Helles to say he was aboard the trawler."

"Well, I know nothing about him. You'd better go and ask the N.T.O."

I hurried along the landing-stage where one of the Pinto's assistants told me that a bird answering exactly to my description had arrived from Helles and, after wandering about on the landing-stage and getting in everybody's way and making a general nuisance of himself until dark, had been told about five minutes ago to hire a sailing-boat and go over to G.H.Q. himself if he was so anxious to get there.

"But, good god," I exclaimed, "he's a suspect!"

"Well, I wasn't to know that."

"But a signal was sent to the Camp Commandant."

"I know nothing about any signal. The fellow was a

nuisance, and I want some grub. I'm not going to stand on this damn pier all night and sit chatting to dagoes."

"Well, will you give me a picket-boat to go after him?"

"No, I won't. My men aren't going to be sent out at this ungodly hour. They're tired, if you aren't."

I stood on the landing-stage and looked out across the choppy water of the roadstead at the lighted tents of G.H.Q. on the other side. I fancied I could see the boat with our fifth-class visitor half way there.

"But look here," I exclaimed in vexation of spirit, "I simply must get hold of this fellow. He may be all right; but he may not. He may have a couple of bombs in his pocket for all we know."

"Good job if he has," the sub-lieutenant declared fervidly. "And I hope he blows something up with them over there." With this he left me on the pier, refusing to listen to another word.

I felt fairly confident that Pascalides would not blow up Sir Ian, and I hoped that the sentries would stop his even getting as far as the camp, but still. . . .

I hurried back to the Assistant-Provost-Marshal and asked him to authorize me to hire a sailing-boat, in which even if I did not catch the visitor I should at any rate reach G.H.Q. soon after him. He authorized this move, and I jumped on board the first available craft. The wind was rising all the time and blowing from the south-west, so I was worried when I found that the baggy-breeched ruffian in the caique I had picked was either drunk or a most incompetent mariner. We fouled two hawsers and crashed into a buoy, and then it began to look as if we should be driven out to sea, the way he was handling the caique. I thumped him on the back and pointed to the lights of G.H.Q. He jabbered something in answer; but the caique leapt forward with the wind dead aft, and the dim outline of the sand-dunes, which should have been on our bow, be-

gan to sweep past us on our starboard beam. I tried to snatch the tiller from the rascal and put the caique into the wind ; but he clung on to it, chattering at me like a gorilla, and we swept on toward the open sea. At the rate we were going we should soon foul the boom. There was no sign of the boat with Pascalides, and I looked anxiously back at the lights of G.H.Q. fast receding astern. By this time I had made up my mind that our fifth-class visitor had fooled me and was bent on executing a desperate revenge for all that he and X—— and the rest of them had suffered at our hands. Then I made a vow to devote at least one hour a day at Mytilene to the study of modern Greek, so that in future I might avoid finding myself in a caique on a dark and stormy night with a mariner to whom I was as incapable of communicating my opinion of his seamanship as if he were in fact the gorilla he so strongly resembled. I made another attempt to wrest the tiller from him, at which he showed his teeth at me with such viciousness that inspired by fright and anger I knocked him down. Then leaving him to pull himself together and take the tiller again, I lowered the big sail myself. This infuriated him. He took out a knife, to which I responded by taking out my pistol and pointing to the oars. He obeyed sullenly, and while he growled and groaned away over his task I sat at the helm with the tiller in one hand and my pistol in the other. Now I received another shock, for when I looked at the lights of G.H.Q. they had vanished, and then suddenly they all flashed up again. My heart was in my mouth for a moment until I realized that it was not the explosion of a bomb, but a temporary failure of the electric light. I decided that whatever harm Pascalides could do would be done by the time I arrived on the scene and I headed the caique back for the pier of K beach. Next morning when I woke up I had the biggest shock of all, for I found my pyjamas soaked in blood. I suppose I strained a blood-vessel when I was

pulling at the sail, and during the night it must have broken.

I found Deedes in a fume when I got back to G.H.Q. about ten o'clock after a weary walk along the beach, sharing the weight of my Wolseley valise with Darwin whose dysentery had made his legs groggy. Pascalides had landed the night before, walked up through the tents unchallenged by a single sentry, and after making inquiries had finally discovered Deedes at work in the I tent. Deedes was inclined to blame me at first for this invasion ; but as soon as he heard my story we had the satisfaction of sending out various tart memorandums from G.H.Q. (Ib) M.E.F. which trickled back some days later scrawled over in blue or red pencil with '*Nothing known of this man here.*' '*Pass to N.T.O. K beach.*' '*From M.L.O. Lancashire Landing to A.P.M. K beach. This is your pigeon, I think*,' and other similar graffiti. As for Pascalides himself we found that he was unable to add anything to our knowledge of the X—— business. So he was sent back to Athens where some months later he was employed by me in an unimportant capacity under the pseudonym of Charles Lamb.

It was the morning after my adventure in the caique that the new Press correspondents arrived at Imbros for the first time, or at any rate it was the first time I saw them. It is hardly necessary to say that by far the most remarkable figure among them was H. W. Nevinson who had been sent out to represent the Provincial Press. He looked and was a paladin. I dip my pen to salute him with a sense of privilege in having seen the man in action. I happened to be the one chosen to administer the oath to these correspondents. I forget the exact wording of the document ; but it was to the effect that they should consider themselves bound by various military rules and regulations and among other things that they should undertake not to communicate with the enemy. One after another signed his name

at the foot, Nevinson with a courtliness of gesture that seemed to express his sense of the slight embarrassment I might be feeling at having to proffer such a superfluous document and at the same time his immediate acknowledgment of the fact that the position of a correspondent had somehow to be clearly set down in black and white. Ashmead-Bartlett was the last to sign, and when he came to the clause about communicating with the enemy he paused.

"I'm hardly likely to do that, am I ?" he exclaimed, flinging down his pen with contemptuous petulance.

"Well, I can't help the phrasing, Bartlett," I replied just as fretfully, for I was feeling tired that morning. "I didn't draw up this document. If you object to signing it, you'd better go and argue the matter with Sir Ian or the C.G.S. It's nothing to do with me. I'm merely carrying out orders in asking for your signature."

So Bartlett signed his name at the foot, murmuring something about its being on a par with the rest of the idiotic behaviour of G.H.Q.

There was once an eccentric individual on the island of Capri, who got it into his head that the other inhabitants of the island were leagued together to annoy him. This belief preyed upon his mind to such an extent that he could not look out of the window at the neighbours walking by without fancying that they were conspiring against him. So in order to break up their plots he used to set fire to newspapers and drop them down on their heads as they passed beneath his balcony. I have often wondered why Ashmead-Bartlett did not try this method of defending himself against the persecution of his opinions by G.H.Q. It might have become famous as an *auto de fe* or act of faith in the power of the Press.

## CHAPTER XIV

### OFF TO MYTILENE

I HAD been slaving away at the files in Ib ever since I had returned from Tenedos, trying to bring my Newgate Calendar of suspects up to date ; but it was a long job, and it was after three o'clock before I was able to get to bed the night before my Mytilene adventure. I had only a couple of hours' sleep, for I was determined to be in good time for the trawler, which was due to leave Kephalo at six o'clock sharp, and I was down at the water's edge with Darwin and the kit by half-past five of that fine calm morning. The prospect of seeing Sappho's Lesbos filled me with an elation of spirit of which the sparkling golden air and temperate rays of the early sun streaming down across the quiet tents behind seemed the perfect expression. The trawler for Mytilene was anchored in the middle of the roadstead, and every grey ship lying out there at anchor caught from the slanting beams of the morning sun the livelier grey of a gull's wing. A spinney of opalescent blue smoke from freshly lighted fires was hanging over the rest camp at the far end of K beach, and the rugged hills of Imbros took on a new richness of Spring from the radiant air. Nothing happened for a while to disturb the blessed calm that brooded over the island. I sat there on the beach, letting the gentle warmth caress my closed eyelids and the quick lap of the sea half lull me to sleep again. Then I looked at my watch and, seeing that it was now a quarter to six, but that the pinnace on which I was counting to

take me out to the trawler was still fussing about on the other side of the roadstead, I decided that we should have to hail it if we wanted to be put on board in time. So I bellowed ' pinnace, ahoy ! ' for a while without effect. Five minutes passed, and then I tried bellowing ' trawler, ahoy ! ' So many signs of activity were now visible on her deck that I was afraid she might start before her time. To my relief the pinnace came fussing across the water in our direction ; but, just as we thought it was hurrying across for us at last, it turned aside and went fussing up to some ship. Smoke began to pour from the trawler's funnel. I was by now thoroughly alarmed. Five minutes to six, four minutes to six, three minutes to six, two minutes to six ! I could hear the rattle of the trawler's chain coming up, and I let out a despairing yell loud enough to wake Eddie Keeling fast asleep outside our tent nearly half a mile behind. Darwin was not good at shouting, for he was too well behaved ; but even he with the prospect of Mytilene fading managed to emit a kind of muffled roar, and at last the pinnace after circling round uncertainly for a minute did come puffing in our direction. When it was about forty yards from the beach, the officer in charge, a disgruntled lieutenant-commander with a bad-tempered bilious face, shouted to know what the hell I wanted.

" What the hell do you suppose I want ? What the hell do you suppose I'm doing down here on the beach at six o'clock ? Paddling ? I want to be put on board the Mytilene trawler."

" It's not my bloody business to fetch and carry you soldiers all over this blasted harbour."

" Well, what is your bloody business ? " I demanded.

" I've got enough to do without being fetched over here to . . ."

" Damn it all," I shouted in exasperation, " a signal was sent last night to say that an officer and his servant were

going to Mytilene in the trawler this morning, and if you know nothing about it, your N.T. show at K beach is responsible. It's not my fault."

Growling ferociously, the disgruntled lieutenant-commander came inshore, and with the help of the crew we got our kit on board and ourselves as well. However, by this time the trawler's anchor was up and she was already moving. I could have wept with rage and disappointment. There would not be another trawler to Mytilene for a week, and by that time the plan outlined for me might have been changed.

"Well, now I'm afraid you'll have a little extra trouble," I said bitterly to my liverish friend. "Either you put me on board that trawler, or if I miss it you'll come back and explain to Captain Mitchell* the principle on which his signals are disregarded." Captain Mitchell was the Naval Adviser to the Commander-in-Chief.

By this time the disgruntled lieutenant-commander was either beginning to feel a little ashamed of his bad temper or a little nervous about the effects of it. Anyway, he chased after the trawler and caught her up just as she was about to head round the point of Kephalo. The kit was flung aboard. Darwin and I scrambled up the side ourselves; and then as the climax to the outraged calm of the morning, a slim young man with a clear-cut profile and blazing eyes of the brightest blue I ever saw glared down at me from the cabin on the bridge, his striped pyjamas adding a last tigerish touch to his cold fury.

"You're late, sir," he snarled. "Why the hell can't you soldiers be on board at the time for sailing?"

This was too much, yes, this was too much; and I told Strange, who was an R.N.R. Lieutenant and in time of peace an officer in one of the big mail steamships, what I thought about him, about his trawler, about the pinnace,

*Rear-Admiral F. H. Mitchell, C.B., D.S.O., R.N.

about the disgruntled lieutenant-commander, and about the Royal Navy.

Strange laughed.

"All right, I'm sorry. Come along up and have some breakfast."

And in his cabin on the bridge, with the morning sun streaming in upon the bacon and eggs and coffee, we ate and were at peace with one another and with all the world.

"Sorry I was so ratty when you came on board," he said. "But I like to sail absolutely to schedule, and I'm rather proud of this ship."

He had reason to be. There was nothing of the dustbin about this trawler, where things went man-o'-war fashion and the captain of it had a pretty notion of making things comfortable both for himself and his passengers.

We called at Tenedos on the way southward to Mytilene. Thompson was down at the quay and handed me his report on the movements of the Vassilaki family since I had left. This I studied in the bows of the trawler, where Darwin, whose dysentery was better again for the moment, sat gazing with wistful eyes at the sublime panorama of the Asiatic shore, saying no doubt to himself how much it would be improved by two piers and an esplanade.

Stavro Vassilaki had taken advantage of the permission I gave his younger brother Yanni to sell a cargo of firewood to the Paymaster at the aerodrome, and had lost no time in sailing round there, inscribed on the Greek bill of health as one of the crew of a small caique. Thompson had made a signal to the Commanding Officer at the aerodrome to warn him of Stavro's arrival on July 12th, so that his movements might be carefully watched and noted. He had heard indirectly that Stavro had landed his cargo and spent most of the day roaming about the aerodrome, but up to the time of writing the report his message to the aerodrome had not

been acknowledged by the authorities there and no word had been sent him about Stavro Vassilaki's behaviour.

I leaned back against a coil of rope and asked mighty Zeus, the father of gods and men, who seemed to be brooding calm and sagacious upon this immemorial scene, why it was that, if with due warning we despatched an interpreter to some Brigade Headquarters and if with all his papers in order he arrived at the notified hour, the betting was ten to one in favour of his being immediately arrested and with difficulty rescued from being shot out of hand, but that, if one sent along a suspected spy of whose behaviour in the trap set for him it was vital to have some information, the betting was ten to one against the least attention's being accorded to him beyond a friendly invitation to wander round where he felt inclined. No answering thunder-clap was heard in the clear sky to tell me what Zeus thought about it. Probably even the father of gods and men found the puzzle insoluble.

I turned back to the report to read that on July 13th a friend of the Vassilakis had asked for a pass for Mytilene. This man whom I will call Vassili Zervaki (he *would* confuse the issue by having a Christian name so similar to the surname of the suspected family) was a naturalized American citizen who had been on Tenedos for about five months without any employment. Thompson's suspicion had been roused by this application, coming as it had on the very day after Stavro Vassilaki's long and apparently disregarded exploration of the aerodrome. So under various pretexts he had three times during the day refused a pass to Zervaki. The steamer for Mytilene had been due at six p.m. At four that afternoon Stavro Vassilaki had come along in a stew and asked for a pass for himself to go to Mytilene and buy wood. Thompson had raised difficulties and demanded to see his papers as an American citizen. Stavro Vassilaki had returned with a kind of a pass uttered by a Govern-

ment Department in Athens and addressed to the British Consul General at the Piraeus, asking that Yanni Vassilaki Xanthaki might be allowed to proceed to Tenedos. His photograph was on this document, which appeared quite genuine.

I leaned back once more against that coil of rope and asked the unresponsive azure how one was ever to arrive at the real name of anybody out here. According to the original telegram of denunciation from Athens Vassilaki Xenaki was our man ; according to the Greek Government it was Yanni Vassilaki Xanthaki ; according to the man himself it was Stavro Vassilaki, to whom had been added a younger brother, Yanni Vassilaki ; and then just to confuse things a little more a friend had come into it called Vassili Zervaki not to mention another brother with the same Christian name as the friend.

I turned back to the report. Thompson had finally given a pass to both men and had arranged for the pair of them to be watched on the journey and for Stavro Vassilaki to be shadowed in Mytilene. In the end it was only Zervaki who embarked, and Thompson had noted as his assumption that when Stavro Vassilaki had found his friend had been successful in obtaining a pass it had been unnecessary to leave Tenedos himself. On the following day (which was yesterday, July 14th) Thompson had told Manoli, his confidential agent, to get into touch with Stavro Vassilaki and find out why he had not gone to Mytilene. Stavro's explanation was that another brother Vassili had become involved in a quarrel with some youngsters who had used 'degrading language' about the whole Vassilaki family, for which Stavro had remained on Tenedos to obtain an apology. Later on that morning, when Thompson was censoring letters and telegrams in the post office, Stavro Vassilaki had come in and handed back his pass for Mytilene. On Thompson's asking him why he had not left, he had

replied that his sister had been taken ill suddenly and that his father had asked him not to go away, but that he hoped to go to Mytilene next week. In support of this excuse, Thompson wrote, two of his sisters had been walking about in the Square that evening, but the third had not been seen. He had entrusted Vedova with the job of finding out whether either and if so which of the two stories was true. In a postscript to the report Thompson noted that when Stavro Vassilaki had asked for his pass to go to Mytilene the day before yesterday he had spoken of his conversation with me and had wanted to know whether Thompson thought he had any chance of being employed by me as a secret agent. I leaned back against the coil of rope and sighed to myself that it had been Yanni Vassilaki who had had those detective ambitions, not Stavro. . . .

"Well, Darwin," I asked, "enjoying the view?"

"Yes, sir, though it's a little bit monotonous. That's one thing I'll always say for ——" he named his native watering-place. "You've only got to look out of the window, as they say, and there's always something going on. But it's very dead and alive all round these parts."

Green hill after green hill swept down to the velvety sea; blue mountain after blue mountain swept up behind those green hills to the sky. I suppose the sight of the French coast from the Bay of Biscay or the English Channel should thrill the fancy with a thought of Pekin beyond; but somehow the thought of Pekin is swallowed up by so many European cities in between. Here, where Asia towered from the Ægean, land overwhelmed the imagination more than sea. Partly, of course, it was the consciousness that this land was hostile which produced such an effect on the mind; but I think that, if I were to make that voyage from Imbros to Lesbos over again in time of peace, I should still be overwhelmed by the landscape on our port beam, by those green hills sweeping down to that calm and crystalline

sea, and by those blue heights beyond. Hitherto I had only beheld many-fountained Ida from afar; but to-day in the trawler we voyaged, as it seemed, along her very base, and how ever to recapture with the pen the magic that was over me when we passed the ancient promontory of Lectum and glided between the fairylands of Asia Minor and Lesbos baffles my desire.

"Shall we have a shot at the lighthouse over there?" Strange asked.

I looked across to where he was pointing and saw a white building high up on a spur of that majestic coast. I begged him not to train his three-pounder on the lighthouse. In my present mood such a proposal seemed like the wanton destruction of a butterfly in one's path merely to indulge the superfluous energy of the moment.

"As a matter of fact it has already been abandoned," Strange continued. "One of our ships knocked it to pieces long ago. I just thought it would be rather fun to see if we could hit it."

But the forsaken Turkish lighthouse, looking hardly bigger than a white butterfly perched up there, had made such an appeal to my sentiment that I pleaded for its life as if it were in very fact a sentient creature and as if with our ridiculous little three-pounder we could have done it any further harm.

"No, it isn't really worth wasting time on to-day," Strange agreed. "We should have to go in considerably closer to the Asiatic shore if we wanted to make any good shooting, and as I want to be in Port Iero at the scheduled time I think we'll jog on."

So we jogged on, though the verb does not quite convey the tranquil splendour of our blue voyage between the continent of Asia and olive-silvery Lesbos. We passed the city of Mytilene tumbling down in orchards and villas and gardens and minarets to its twin ports on either side of a

peninsula, bare and rugged where it fronted Asia and crowned by a great Frankish castle.

Soon after this the trawler turned into a narrow channel, as narrow as a railway-cutting, which ran for over three miles between wooded banks until it widened to form an expanse of water some six miles long and four miles wide surrounded by olive-woods with stark mountains beyond. This was Port Iero where the *Canopus*, the *Euryalus* and various smaller craft lay safe from the most enterprising submarine. The effect of gliding up what seemed a green river to reach this great sheet of silver water at the end was like emerging from the back of some tidal creek in the West Country to behold warships anchored in the Hamoaze.

Captain Heathcoat Grant,* the Senior Naval Officer at Port Iero, was the very host to set the seal on such an exquisite voyage. He gave us champagne for dinner, God bless him ; and when the lungs are full of radiant air, when the mind has been drinking life-giving draughts of beauty all day, when the body has ripened like a grape in the sun, why, then champagne will have the natural dignity of an element, will indeed seem to have bubbled up from the depths of earth itself. I recanted every oath I had sworn that morning when the disgruntled lieutenant-commander and I had been having the little argument over our passage across Kephalo Bay to catch Strange's precise trawler. Captain Grant had many other virtues besides knowing that champagne was the only drink for dinner that evening, and not the least of them for a Jacobite like myself was that he was a cadet of Glenmoriston. His spacious cabin in the old *Canopus* was a comfortable sight, the evening sun streaming in through the ports to dye the chintz covers of the chairs with richer hues of red and rose, the doors leading to the gold-washed stern-walk open wide.

*Admiral Sir Heathcoat Grant, K.C.M.G., C.B., R.N.

His wife had just presented him with a daughter, and he picked up a framed photograph of her with the baby in her arms to show me. A memory of the way he looked down at it for a silent moment or two before he put it back in its place comes back to me from a day already deeply enough impressed with beauty.

During dinner, we heard tales of the Falkland Islands. I remember Captain Grant's description of the feelings of himself and the ship's company when half-way to Monte Video they were ordered back to Port Stanley, there to mount guard over the entrance and be prepared for bombardment by Von Spee's victorious squadron. When he could not get into communication with the wireless station at Port Stanley, Captain Grant decided that the Germans had been before him and were now in possession. I thrill again as I write this to think of hearing from the lips of her Captain the tale of that old ship cleared for action and steaming into Port Stanley to fight by herself the whole of Von Spee's squadron. And as she steamed in, with the crews standing by their guns, the inhabitants of Port Stanley thought she was the first of the German ships. Church bells and dockyard bells clanged alarm and the gallant volunteers paraded to man the land defences, until signals were made and she was recognized. Captain Grant did not know that Sir Doveton Sturdee with *Inflexible* and *Invincible* was steaming hard across the South Atlantic. So, he took *Canopus* into the inner harbour, grounded her on the mud out of sight of the sea, and sat tight to defend the wireless station. For the rest of November and the first week of December great efforts were made to put Port Stanley into some kind of defensive condition; but though it was known that Von Spee had rounded Cape Horn he and his squadron did not approach. Instead of the German the British squadron arrived on the morning of the seventh of December. And the next morning before eight

o'clock *Canopus* signalled to the flagship that the look-out on land reported smoke visible southward.

"We had some shots at the *Gneisenau*," said Captain Grant. "Gave him the shock of his life, for of course he couldn't see us, and he must have wondered how the wireless station had managed to mount twelve-inch guns."

But those shots at the *Gneisenau* were all that the *Canopus* could manage, for she was fast on the mud, and it had been hard to watch all the others steam out of the harbour in pursuit of Von Spee, steam out with their escort of albatrosses while she remained fast on the mud.

And now here was the old *Canopus* drowsing in this lotus haven, with never a snotty on board who had not heard the guns of the *Gneisenau*.

Nor was that memorable day to come to an end with a champagne dinner and the tales of a delightful host, for Heathcote-Smith* was another guest, and he invited me to accompany him on a nocturnal expedition in the *Omala* to take off a messenger from the Asiatic shore who was expected to-night with news from the interior.

Heathcote-Smith had been Vice-Consul in Smyrna when war broke out, and he was now, though nominally Vice-Consul at Salonica, running the Intelligence in Mytilene which he did superlatively well. Testimony to the efficiency of his organization may be read in Liman Von Sanders's book *Five Years in Turkey*. Unfortunately his work for a time was much hampered by the ill-informed opposition of an amateur yachtsman who was in command of the flotilla of motor-launches in the Ægean and wanted to exercise parental authority over the motor-boat of the Intelligence organization.

Heathcote-Smith was, as I remember, the son of an English country parson, and he had had no kind of connec-

*C. E. Heathcote-Smith, O.B.E., H.B.M.'s Consul-General at Alexandria.

tion with the Levant before he became a Student Interpreter ; but his darkness and litheness, his fluency in Greek and Turkish, his soft voice and large moustache and big nose and somewhat exotic manner combined to suggest some ancestral link with this part of the world. Whenever it fell to my lot to have to defend him against the outrageous and completely baseless insinuations of ingenuous young naval officers who had picked up some odds and ends from the wild stories that were being circulated in ward-rooms, the first statement I always had to rebut was Heathcote-Smith's Levantine origin. James Elroy Flecker, the poet, who was a contemporary of Heathcote-Smith in the same Service and like him the son of an English parson made a similarly exotic impression. Had Flecker lived, he would probably have been serving his country in the same kind of job as Heathcote-Smith on those Ægean shores, and no doubt he would have incurred the same kind of hostility. Luckily for our work Heathcote-Smith had more loyal friends among naval officers than enemies, and in January, 1918, he was himself made a Commander R.N.V.R. No Intelligence officer grumbles to find a good deal of mud adhering to his clothes. He expects it as part of his job ; he has, however, some reason to resent its being flung by his own side. Perhaps it was the fellow-feeling which made them kind ; but certainly my own experience was to lead me to regard the Intelligence agents of the enemy with respect for the gentlemanly way in which they fought. And so, as the Italian prayer has it, ' God protect me against my friends ; I will protect myself against my enemies.'

I had already met Heathcote-Smith at G.H.Q., where he had arrived one dusk in a white flannel suit with grey lines to collogue with Deedes. His silky voice (and when I write silky I am remembering that silk will almost scream if a frayed finger-nail be run across it), his deep lustrous brown yet faintly mocking eyes, his habit of walking always on

his toes (not in the least so as to suggest furtiveness, but rather because he always seemed on tiptoe for a flight like Keats's sweet-peas), the dreamy earnestness of his gaze when he was expounding his scheme for the organization and equipment of ten thousand Anatolian Greek irregulars to be turned loose on the Turks in Asia Minor, his childish sense of fun, his sudden rapid denunciations of stupidity, his *enfant terrible* questions, and the way he somehow suggested one of the attractive heroes of the Arabian Nights like Prince Camaralzaman, all these aspects of him had combined to make me most anxious to meet him again and on his own territory. To supplement my attempt at a portrait of him I extract from a letter written to me from G.H.Q., when I was ill that autumn in Athens, the following :

*Heathcote-Smith turned up here last night and as luck would have it 'tiptoed at top speed' (in a white suit much shrunk owing to it and, he inside it, having been precipitated into the sea two hours previously) into C.G.S.'s tent by mistake. Seeing C.G.S. commenced his oration at maxim speed before the latter could bring his guns and A.D.C. into action! Result Pan-Hellenic shares gone up considerably.* (This refers to Heathcote-Smith's scheme to land irregulars at Aivali). *He was more like himself than ever. Clothes as described. Eyes typical and very 'expressive of' the situation (which he considers acute). On his toes practically the whole time, thus putting 'Dolly, what's her name' of the Gaiety to shame. Remained in undried clothes the whole day and even insisted while out walking with us on* paddling *! the wherewith to* insure *the evening chill which came on sure enough about* 10 *p.m. when he was last seen in the company of Jan Smith having brandy poured down his throat. Nevertheless he was up betimes this morning and bathed (the weather is* decidedly *colder now early) then had a bath (which my servant thought "redundant") and finally ate two* bad *eggs (all eggs under the*

*new régime are bad*) *without turning a hair* (*having no kit with him* no *hair, I may mention, had been turned either on head* or *chin!*)

*Thus our Heathcote, bless him!*

The moon had set when we went on board the *Omala*. This craft which belonged to the Intelligence organization run by V in Athens was a motor boat about forty feet over all, and with an ample beam of ten or perhaps twelve feet. I felt deliciously excited when I paced her dewy deck in the grey starshine and was carried up the narrow channel between dark wooded banks until near the entrance the *Omala* was challenged by the sentries of the look-out post on a rocky islet in the entrance, where guns had been mounted. We stopped to explain who we were by the rays of the search-light, the guns eyeing us like open-mouthed wondering children on the outskirts of a street argument. We were allowed to pass out and were soon heading north-east in the slight swell that was running. Presently we shut down our engines and signalled with an electric torch to our consort, a gasoline caique, which was to have joined us about here. We waited five or ten minutes without getting any reply, and then started off again for Asia. I went below and found the cabin full of shadowy figures in the blurred lamplight, full too of melons rolling about and a smell of cheese that was so material as almost to be describable as rolling about too. I decided my only chance of reaching Asia without being sick was to stay on deck, however damp the night air, and I made myself comfortable forward, there to lie back against some gear and watch a continent slowly take shape dim and vast in the starshine. On and on we rolled until we were within a couple of miles of our rendezvous when smoking was forbidden and the engines were put to half-speed while we crept in close to the hostile shore.

The messenger we were expecting from the interior was

to strike two matches in succession to warn us of his presence in answer to a single flash from our torch. We gave the signal. There was no reply from the beach. It would have been more than imprudent to flash our torch a second time, so the tiny skiff was launched, and Heathcote-Smith was rowed ashore by one of the crew. I was anxious to set foot on Turkish territory myself; and when the skiff came back I joined Heathcote-Smith on the soft beach overhung by olive trees where we stood peering anxiously inland. Once in the distance a dog howled; but that and the low gurgle of the water sucking at the base of a rock thrust out from the shore or the gentle splash of it right along the glimmering crescent of starlit sand were all the sounds we heard. We waited, motionless and silent, listening for the crackle of a twig under a hurried footstep, for the whisper of the undergrowth at the passage of a stealthy form. My fancy went racing away up through the olive-groves and across the dim foothills to spring from mountain top to mountain top, to sweep across the deserts of Persia, to battle with the winds of Tibet, to leap the great wall of China, to swirl down the Yang-tse-Kiang, to stand upon the shores of the Yellow Sea and watch the sun rise from the ultimate East.

Thus for an hour was my fancy occupied, and then we rowed back to the *Omala* without our messenger. It was decided to lie under the lee of a small island off the coast until dawn, and by this time neither the smell of the melons nor of the cheese could keep me from falling asleep in one of the bunks along the side of the cabin. Moreover, what slight swell there had been when we left Port Iero was not perceptible in this bay. So I dozed, to be wakened an hour or two later by the noise of feet tramping overhead and cries of 'Submarine! Submarine!' I rushed on deck. The sun was not yet up, and looking through my glasses in the deceitful light of dawn I persuaded myself that the

object some six miles away over the lavender water really was a submarine. Heathcote-Smith, his trousers turned up to the knees was running backward and forward along the deck, and waving a grenade in each hand. Rifles were being served out to the Greek crew. Then Heathcote-Smith shouted to me: "Hold these grenades, I must put on my overcoat," though whether he felt he had to put it on to keep off the spray from the submarine's shells or the cool breezes of dawn I never knew. I held the grenades while Heathcote-Smith wrapped himself up for the approaching engagement; after which he snatched the grenades from me again and rushed about the deck more wildly than ever, crying that our best chance was to ram the submarine, until in his excitement he dropped a grenade on Ben Hodder's toes. O rare Ben Hodder! All he said was: "That little bit of Turkish-delight is better overboard," as he stooped down to pick up the grenade and drop it over the side of the boat.

Ben Hodder in times of peace had been a licorice-grower. He was now a Lieutenant in the R.N.V.R. and the representative of our Intelligence organization in Samos, somewhere on the mainland opposite which island was the estate he cultivated. He was a stocky little man in the mid-forties, perhaps a year or two past them, and in his white uniform he had the appearance of a warrant-officer of many years' standing. He was a square-headed, grave, dependable little man who believed in deeds rather than in words. He had been much impressed by the practical methods of the French Intelligence Service under Commandant La Mouche, who wishing to eliminate a man they found a hindrance to their work in the islands had pushed him off the quay at Vathy into the water of the harbour, whence he had been rescued by a French gunboat, taken on board, and sent to Marseilles. To a remonstrance from the Greek authorities in Samos the French replied that the man had

been arrested on the high seas and that they were strictly within their international rights.

"That's the way to serve them," Ben Hodder said to me, rubbing his hands appreciatively. "Now if you could have a talk over it with Captain Deedes . . . a fine fellow that, sir," and I felt that to the rare Ben Hodder Deedes's mere name was an earnest of merit. "Yes," he went on, "I reckon that you and I could clear up this coast between us."

"You mean by pushing into the harbours all the people we didn't approve of, and then getting them arrested on the high seas?"

"That's it, that's it," Ben Hodder agreed, giving my ribs a confidential poke. "That's the only treatment they'll ever understand. We've got to take the gloves off out here. Yes, you come along down to Chios and Samos, sir, and we'll make a clean sweep of all the gentlemen in my quarter."

It was a cordial invitation, and I was sorry that I could not avail myself of it then. Many months of war were to elapse before I ate with Ben Hodder the dishes or drank with Ben Hodder the Samian wine to which he invited me that morning. That very afternoon he left Mytilene for Vathy, a snug little port to which my heart is often turning, and we shall not meet him again until half-way through the last volume of these Memories.

"Do you think that really is a submarine?" Ben Hodder asked, turning round sharply and looking up over his shoulder to fix me with those honest eyes of his.

"Well, really, I don't believe it is, Hodder."

"No more do I," said Ben Hodder. Then he called to Heathcote-Smith. "Mr. Heathcote, that's no submarine."

But Heathcote-Smith was as much offended by the rare Ben Hodder's want of faith as a spiritualistic hostess on the

rapping of whose table some visitor has ventured to cast a doubt.

"Of course it's a submarine," he cried. "Now then, stand by, all. Full speed ahead! We've got to ram him. That's our only chance."

With this he dashed up into the bows of the *Omala* and stood there like a distracted figurehead, waving his grenades menacingly at what even he had to admit two minutes later was our own missing consort, the gasoline caique, on which the great bland morning sun was winking over the mountain tops.

We put into a channel between two diminutive islands and rowed ashore to bathe and breakfast. The splendour of that dawn with fairy coasts rising all around from the limpid sea, the exhilarating wash of wine-gold air, the mild warmth of the early sun on the grey pebbles of the beach where we lay after our bathe to gaze up at the egg-shell blue of the morning sky, listening the while to the sizzle of the fish being cooked on a fire of driftwood and to Hadkinson singing some old folk song of Macedonia light as the morning breeze. . . . Hadkinson! I have not mentioned Hadkinson yet, which is doubly remiss, for besides being the skipper of the *Omala*, he was also a European personality, a rosy apple-cheeked man of about fifty-five who with his white hair and clear vivid blue eyes might have been a Yorkshire farmer. He was as a matter of fact a farmer; but his farm was in Macedonia where for twenty-four years he had lived through all the Balkan troubles and had scarcely lost a head of stock, though one of the battles between the Serbians and the Bulgarians was fought over his land, indeed, as far as I could gather, in and out of his very front door. Nothing more English in outward appearance was imaginable. Yet he spoke his own language with a foreign accent and less fluently than many others, among which were French, German, Italian, Turk-

ish, Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian, and Albanian. He had a beautiful voice and was very musical, so that to hear him singing the folk songs of the various countries he knew so intimately was an exquisite delight. When war broke out he had been staying with Aubrey Herbert in Somerset, and now here he was, Lieutenant, R.N.V.R., manager rather than skipper of the *Omala*, with a band of devoted Anatolian Greeks who longed to be led by him against the Turks. I never heard him speak against any Balkan nation except the Serbian; but it seems a law of nature that no man can love both the Serbs and the Bulgars, and Hadkinson loved the Bulgars. I said to him once after he had been spinning me a long yarn of fantastic adventure that he was like a character in one of Bernard Shaw's early plays, and he told me that as a matter of fact he had been a friend of Shaw's twenty-seven years ago. He called the desperadoes under his command by the name of Robin Hood's men—Little John, Will Scarlett, Alan o'Dale, Friar Tuck, and the rest of them. He worshipped beauty whether it took the form of music, poetry, scenery, or good food.

The channel between those two small islands flowed across a level bottom of silver sand. To swim ashore through that limpid current and lie on the grey sun-warmed pebbles while Hadkinson sang softly his old songs to the accompaniment of a flute played by one of his men, in the distance somewhere a tinkle of goat-bells, close at hand the crackle of the breakfast fire, that was an experience which touched rapture. And then there was the breakfast itself with lots of oil and garlic and thyme and rosemary, so much that the bony little fishes in the middle of the savoury mess hardly got in one's way. Darwin, whose dysentery had begun again, was still longing for the esplanade clock, and I noticed that he was not making much headway with his fish.

"Well, sir," he said apologetically, "I should like a slice

of good old roast beef. This food tastes a bit too strong for my fancy."

Hadkinson, who was concerned about Darwin's melancholy, whispered to me that he was afraid he was lousy, and that it was consciousness of that which made him mope.

"But don't you worry if he is," he said consolingly, when I gasped. "I'll take him round to the Turkish bath and get his clothes put right while he's inside."

I think Hadkinson was wrong about Darwin's condition; but anyway we were both of us to encounter more ferocious creatures in the bugs of the Mytilene hotel where we stayed.

"I wish you could cure him of his dysentery," I said.

Hadkinson thought this would be easy enough. He was an amateur of doctoring and had for years been curing the Macedonian peasants of maladies more serious than dysentery.

It was nine o'clock when we left the little island and went on board the *Omala*. Just as I stepped into the skiff Hadkinson presented me with an enormous sponge which one of his men had found.

"Here's a souvenir of your first trip with us," he said.

And for many years I tried loyally to use that sponge, though it was nearly as unyielding as a football and seldom failed to scratch me severely in my bath.

It was a great moment when I landed in uniform on the quay of the southerly port of Mytilene. We had hitherto preserved the convention of respecting the neutrality of the island itself. The officers of the ships in Port Iero were only allowed ashore in mufti; but I stepped boldly on to the crowded quay with Darwin in solemn attendance, and by my pistol I proclaimed myself a combatant. The Greek officers that hated Venizelos glared when I gave them the courtesy of a salute; those that loved him responded warmly.

I was completely fagged out when I reached the Hotel Grande Bretagne where I was to stay, and flinging myself down on the bed I fell asleep almost at once to the ceaseless ratcheting of the cicalas in a pomegranate tree aflame with blossom in the small high-walled garden just below the window of my room.

## CHAPTER XV

### DAYS AND NIGHTS IN LESBOS

THE Hotel Grande Bretagne or Xenodocheion Megalé Bretania stood back from a quiet by-street that wound up in a gradual slope from one of the crowded business thoroughfares of Mytilene. The front door was reached by a steep flight of dazzling stone steps with a hedge of aromatic shrubs on either side of them for parapet. A terrace with pots of sun-baked flowers and a few blistered and rickety chairs intervened between the steps and the actual door, over which hung the rusty apparatus for an awning; but the linen to supply the shade had perished, so that the guests of the hotel could not enjoy any *al fresco* conversation until the cool of the evening. The façade of two storeys was painted over in bold letters with the name of the hostelry in French and Greek, and really it was not at all a bad place. My room was the corner one of an unusually wide corridor, which with windows at both ends of it divided the bedrooms on the first floor. Heathcote-Smith, whose wife and children had not long gone back to England, was installed in the corner room at the other end. We did not take our meals in the small, floridly furnished dining-room on the ground floor, so I cannot testify to the quality of the cuisine except as regards the coffee which was excellent provided you liked Turkish coffee, which I did. The other guests were mostly well-to-do refugees from the mainland with a sprinkling of commercial travellers whose salesmanship had been sadly damped by the ever encroaching tide

of war. These guests always sounded as if they were enjoying their food, which they ate in an atmosphere of lavish hair-oil and rice-powder to the accompaniment of shrill chattering. I fancy that the only positive discomforts were the squalor of the sanitary arrangements and the presence, in my bedroom at any rate, of innumerable juvenile bugs, partially tralucent creatures as bright as rubies which scurried about over the sheets like animated cayenne pepper. My arms and legs and shoulders and neck looked every morning as if they had been rubbed with a nutmeg-grater. Full-grown bugs may be more repulsive than these minute creatures, but they provide their victim with the satisfaction of laying them out with a hammer, sometimes half a dozen at a blow when he opens on them in close formation after a carefully planned surprise with an electric torch. These infant buglets would never have provoked the use of a hammer on them, even had the walls of the bedroom been stout enough to invite such violence. A single blow might have obliterated a hundred, but such vicious and esurient atoms could have incarnadined the multitudinous seas, and against their myriads what was a hammer? They percolated the mosquito-net as easily as claret; they seemed to rise from the mattress like a crimson dew. At the booths of French fairs one used to be able to buy a packet of 'Russian fleas' for two sous. These 'fleas' were actually the dried interior of the wild-rose fruits called hips, and they were guaranteed to give the person in whose bed they were scattered a night of misery. Compared with those minikin bugs of Mytilene that penny practical joke was a soothing lanolin. However, the little beasts were not fond of daylight, and so I slept fast that sixteenth of July until late afternoon.

The problem I had to face when I woke up was what to tell Heathcote-Smith about my mission to Mytilene. Ostensibly I was here in my capacity as liaison officer between

G.H.Q. and the Islands to have a look at the Intelligence work which was being carried on with such conspicuous ability and success. Should I tell Heathcote-Smith that I was here to spread a rumour? By giving him my full confidence I knew I should gain the advantage of his help and advice. But after considering the position I decided I should be able to avail myself better of his experience if he were not committed to sharing the secret. However good an actor he might be, he would play the part I wanted him to play better if he did not know he was acting. I went along the corridor to his room and found him seated at a table, clothed in nothing but a sheet.

"I've got a touch of this beastly dysentery again," he explained.

I did not at the time perceive the connection between dysentery and dressing oneself in a sheet, and looking back at that costume of his after many years I do not feel convinced that even now I have quite grasped the causality.

"Can I speak to you for a moment, Heathcote, on rather a private matter?"

He dismissed Mr. Zecchini, his secretary, and put himself at my disposal.

"This is such an important matter, Heathcote," I murmured, "that even the people waiting outside to see you . . ."

Heathcote-Smith jumped up and, rushing out into the corridor, he hustled out of it like intruding poultry half a dozen huge patient Anatolians who had been waiting all the afternoon to be given whatever desperate job he had in view for them. I had been half hoping that one of them would have lingered to put an inquisitive ear to the keyhole; but the apparition of that strenuous ghost inspired too much awe. A minute after his irruption the corridor was empty of every living thing except the flies.

"Look here, Heathcote," I said with a simulation of

embarrassment, "I'm feeling rather badly about this visit of mine to Mytilene. The fact is . . ." I hesitated, before I went on with a gravity that touched portentousness. "Look here, I know I can trust you never to give me away if I tell you why I've really come here."

"Of course."

"No, but it would finish me off completely if anybody ever knew that I'd told you what I'm going to tell you."

Heathcote-Smith gathered his sheet round him as Julius Cæsar his toga after Brutus had stabbed him.

"I don't think I require a lesson from you on holding my tongue."

I bowed in acceptation of the rebuke.

"Well, the fact is, Heathcote, they've decided to land here and attack Smyrna, and they want me to get information about possible camping sites for troops."

I have often thought how fortunate it was for me that Heathcote-Smith was wearing nothing except a sheet when I made this revelation. If he had been fully dressed, he might have resorted to physical violence, so indignant was he for a while. But the need of keeping that sheet round him handicapped his striking power, and he contented himself with throwing back his head, flashing his lustrous deep eyes, and laughing bitterly:

"These soldiers are mad! They're even stupider than I thought they were. Though I expected something better of Deedes. I can't understand it. Why on earth have they this rooted objection to consulting the men on the spot? It's really incredible. Here are you, knowing nothing about this part of the world, unable even to speak the language, sent out to find camping sites for . . . for how many troops?" he broke off his tirade to ask sharply.

"For about forty thousand, Heathcote," I said humbly.

"It's like Alice in Wonderland!"

"Well, but, Heathcote, the damage is done now. It's no

use getting annoyed with me. The only thing is to make the best of it and try to arrange for these camping sites as secretly as possible."

"Secretly!" Heathcote-Smith scoffed. "You can't find camping sites for forty thousand troops in secret, my dear man."

"But you would have been able to. . . ."

"I should have done my best."

"Well, then, I'm sure you'll help me to do my best."

Heathcote-Smith walked up and down the room for a while, his sheet sweeping the boards behind him as majestically as the cloak of the ghost when he bids Hamlet follow him to a more secluded part of the Elsinore battlements.

"No wonder we don't get through the Straits," he declared in an aside to the Muse of History. "This is typical of our methods. Here we are at a crisis—though nobody at G.H.Q. realizes what an appalling crisis it is—here we are with another major operation before us, and a man without any qualifications of any kind is sent to prepare for it. You're not an engineer. You know nothing about the people or the country. You can't speak the language. It's incredible! Still, I suppose I must do my best to get them out of this mess. But I shall write a very strong letter to Deedes and put before him the folly of this. . . ."

"But, Heathcote," I interrupted, "you can't do that without getting me into trouble. Deedes made a special point that you were not to be told."

Heathcote-Smith began to flap his sheet like an angry white wyandotte.

"Only because he felt that you had so much responsibility already on your shoulders," I added hastily, for strong emotion is bad for dysentery. "He thought that a stunt like this might interfere with your other work. I really believe his only motive for not telling you was that he did not want to worry you."

Heathcote-Smith was always inclined to resent the suggestion that he was incapable of doing twenty-six hours' work in the twenty-four; but somehow I managed to allay his indignation by pointing out that he had nothing to be angry about now, because I had disobeyed orders by taking him fully into my confidence.

"When are these troops coming?" he demanded.

"Well, I cannot say exactly when. I suppose it will depend to some extent on the kind of report I am able to make."

"But this sort of surveying requires an expert, and what do you know about water?" he asked presently.

"Very little," I admitted.

"It's fantastic!" he declared for the twentieth time.

"Yes, it does seem rather ridiculous. But there was nobody else who could be spared, and then the idea was that I would never convey the impression of being a practical engineer. The last thing I resemble is a military dowser. I think that Deedes attached a good deal of importance to my poetic appearance. I think he remembered about Sappho and fancied I might be taken for an archæologist or something if I started digging or whatever you do to find water."

"Yes, yes," said Heathcote-Smith peevishly. "But that sort of thing can be overdone. After all, the solid fact remains that forty thousand troops are going to be landed here and that suitable camping sites must be found for them."

"It is rather a large order, isn't it?"

"If I had been consulted," Heathcote-Smith went on, "I should have suggested taking Aristarchi Bey into our confidence."

"Aristarchi Bey?"

"Aristarchi is a delightful fellow who lives here with his brother, his brother's wife, and Mrs. Koumpas, his widowed

sister. He is an engineer and practised for years in Glasgow. He is a devoted friend of ours, talks English perfectly, and his father was Prince of Samos under the Turks."

I demurred at first to the notion of taking anybody however dependable into our confidence over such a grave matter as this ; but in the end I admitted that there seemed nothing else to be done if the sites were to be chosen suitably.

"And I'll pretend that I'm looking for a sanatorium for our invalided troops," I suggested.

Heathcote-Smith looked at me as scornfully as the long gamekeeper may have looked at Mr. Winkle when he suggested putting a stuffed partridge on a post and shooting at it for practice.

"If you think a story like that will take in these people . . . but of course you don't know these people, that's the trouble."

"Well, if Aristarchi Bey and I go all over the place searching for water, we must give some sort of explanation."

"The whole business is so utterly preposterous that I don't think it matters what you say," Heathcote-Smith assured me contemptuously. "However, I'll send a message to Aristarchi Bey, and we might lunch there to-morrow. To-night we shall have to go over again for our messenger. Would you like to come with us in the *Omala?*"

We dined that evening in a little restaurant by the quayside. Hadkinson had ordered cockles which were hauled up by the waiter in a bucket from the harbour where they had been keeping fresh. And what marvellous cockles they were! I have read a Latin poem somewhere—is it quoted by Aulus Gellius?—which gives a list of Mediterranean delicacies and the places where they can be tasted in perfection. I remember that the inspired epicure mentions the little green-spined garfish of Sorrento and the cockles of Mytilene as among the supreme delights of the palate. In my opinion the *verde spina* whether it be caught off

Sorrento or elsewhere is not a particularly succulent affair, but the cockles of Mytilene . . . there the poet uttered his profoundest wisdom. To take one's seat in that narrow quayside restaurant, to clap the hands and call for cockles from the eager waiter who bustles up to serve such wise customers; then to watch him dodge his way across the road through the continuous procession of mules dragging big-wheeled carts laden with jars of oil, kneel down by the water's edge, and haul up a bucket full of cockles; and finally to hear the bivalves come clattering down on the big empty dish that awaits them, these are among the sharpest joys of anticipation the human appetite may know. Nor is it merely the anticipation which is so delicious. The tongue that savours the cockles of Mytilene and hesitates to acclaim them as one of the most significant contributions made by shellfish to human happiness deserves to be for ever tied. The cockle in perfection definitely competes with the cherrystone clam, and there are occasions when even the Whitstable native might be passed over in its favour. Such an occasion was that purple evening of July when the lights of Mytilene were reflected in quivering runnels of gold across the calm waters of the little port, when Hadkinson was telling his magical old tales of Macedonian adventure or singing *mezzo voce* his magical old songs of mountainy love, interrupting both to lean across the table and point out a specially dapper cockle my eye had missed, and when Heathcote-Smith, his eyes lustrous as the opulent night, was silkily murmuring remote and fantastically tricked out sarcasms like some vague being to be met with in the pages of Lewis Carroll. Yet, when after dinner we strolled comfortably along toward the public gardens, the great dark expanse of northern sky behind us was threaded at intervals by zigzags of dull silver; and this was not summer lightning, but the flashes of shell fire over the Peninsula a hundred and twenty miles away.

The band was playing in the small summer pavilion when we reached the gardens. The ladies of Mytilene and the officers of the Greek garrison were circling round and round its music on the gravel promenade that divided the bandstand from several rows of seats for the audience. The illuminated area was not large, and at a distance of a few yards it was enclosed by thick groves of laurel, pine, and ilex which crowded impenetrable to the eye beyond. Hadkinson and Heathcote-Smith went off to make the final arrangements about the *Omala*, and I was left alone to circle round the music until the expedition was ready to start. In spite of long absence from the sight of women, the ladies of Mytilene made no impression on me of reality. They were like a rice-powdered chorus in the background of a scene from *Carmen*; and the officers in their white uniforms who saluted one another so solemnly every time they met in that slow circumambulation were not more real. If the sight of my khaki-clad self promenading round that music caused them any surprise it was imperceptible: like gold-fish in a bowl they seemed entirely preoccupied with their own leisurely revolutions.

After wandering round for about half an hour until I was nearly bemused by the tinkling old operatic tunes, the swish of paper fans, the odour of musk and chypre, the jingling of swords, the clicking of fat beads, and the strangely vacuous movement, I saw a shadow beckoning from a dark leafy alley, and turning away to follow the messenger I faded from the scene. Five minutes later I was tasting the sharp salty air of the harbour as we rowed out to the *Omala*. The rich yellow crescent of the moon had set. We were off again to Asia.

The night was calm. I slept all the way over in spite of Hadkinson's melons which still took up most of the cabin space. I suppose that Hadkinson himself did sleep sometimes, though it was hard to find out when he did. Anyway,

he was always as fresh and rosy as an apple in the dews of a fine September morning. There was no answering match from the messenger when the engines of the *Omala* were stopped at the same anchorage as the previous night. We hung about in the silence, wondering what could have happened. Even Hadkinson was nervy, for his brother was in Smyrna, and though Rahmi Bey, the Vali, disliked the Germans and was well disposed toward the English (for which he has since paid with lifelong banishment at the hands of Mustapha Kemal) he might not be able to save him from the firing-squad should our organization be broken up through some accident. We told ourselves that the agent in Constantinople had been late in getting his message through to the agent in Broussa, that the agent in Broussa had found communication with Smyrna temporarily interrupted by troop movements, and finally that the messenger from Smyrna had chosen another route for some reason. We waited until the grey dawn glimmered above the mountain tops and began to lave the star-drenched sky. Then with reluctance we decided it was time to get away from this hostile coast. However, we had already stayed too long. The Ægean tide does not offer a conspicuous motion, but while we had been waiting for our belated messenger it had dropped a foot or so and left the *Omala* wedged upon a bank of sand. This was not a comfortable position with the sky lightening so rapidly and ourselves within fifty yards of the shore. Half a dozen of the crew jumped overboard and tried to push the boat off ; but for all their efforts and groans she would not budge. By this time the vain churning of her engines in the inadequate water and the efforts to float her had roused the dogs in a small village behind the olive-grove that fringed the curve of the beach.

"We'll never get her off till the tide makes," said Hadkinson. "She is lying like a dead ting on the sand, Hetcot."

So sacks of flour were brought up from below and put round the rail forward to serve as a parapet. Then much to the delight of the crew rifles were served out, though with no ammunition as yet, for the pleasure of lying on their bellies behind a parapet of flour sacks to snipe their Turkish enemies would have been too keen for our warriors to have avoided the temptation of blazing off at the first thing that moved. Morning was not far away beyond the mountain tops. From those high ramparts drooped a cluster of warm-hued clouds like apricots hanging down over a garden wall; and here and there trails of rosy-tinted mist like bands of wandering nymphs glided away up the craggy glens. As the first beams of the sun came winking over the mountain tops, somebody pointed to what looked very like the winking of bayonets among the trees. A Turkish patrol? I tried to remember the tune of that favourite musical composition; but I could only remember another one called the Turkish Retreat, which I learned to play on the piano in early youth. The air was so clear and lucid that we could fancy we actually heard the tramp of feet marching down through the olives.

"Turkish soldier he is not good," said one of the irregulars to me, spitting contemptuously.

I wondered whether he alluded to the morale or the morality of his hereditary foe. And then, just as Heathcote-Smith was tiptoeing into the bows with half a dozen bandoliers of cartridges for the men by the flour-bags, the *Omala* floated. Two minutes later we were chugging along toward the luminous green and grey shapes of islands along the horizon, among which we should find good anchorage and bath and breakfast and sun-dyed beaches. In the diamonded dancing wake of our course the baying of the village dogs turned gradually to a sound remote and incredible as fairy horns. Presently I became aware of a melodious sound near at hand and looking up saw that our Anatolian irregu-

lars, cheated of their fight, had laid down their rifles and, squatting round in a semicircle, were singing low to the accompaniment of a flute, a dream in their eyes of Aivalik where their wives were, and their children, and the olives of home.

When we got back to Mytilene, Heathcote-Smith and I interviewed Aristarchi Bey, in whom I found another friend. He was a tall loose-limbed man of tremendous energy with a small moustache, a hooked nose in a long face, and crisp dark hair streaked with grey. His villa was on the outskirts of the town, and he used to ride backward and forward to business on a bicycle along a dusty sun-shattered stretch of road which ran for a mile or so between fields of maize and vegetables with no more shade than what was grudgingly cast by the few isolated pomegranate-trees that stood up as lank as hop-poles along the wire fence. I can see him now, his coat-tails flapping behind him in the hot wind, his wheels looping the dust as he rode up the last quivering slope in a desperate corkscrew of almost exhausted energy to vault from his bicycle and come swinging in through the garden gate, the bell above which would go on tinkling for a couple of minutes after he was indoors, such a vigorous slam would he have given it behind him. I have called Aristarchi's house a villa; but he himself would have scorned such an appellation. To him it was a house, such as you might see on the outskirts of an English town and, whatever the sublimity of the view from those windows looking down across a gradual green declivity over the lustrous Ægean to the mighty façade of Asia towering along the horizon beyond, as such a more wonderful phenomenon than the radiant beauty of its setting.

"We have tried to get a really British house here," he told me proudly, in fluent English that had but a touch of foreign inflection.

And when I looked at its 1890 Gothic, its shrubberies,

and, alas, its sadly wilted herbaceous borders of old-fashioned English flowers, I was able to assure him quite sincerely that he had succeeded.

"Homeliness and comfort," he barked, for, as I recall it, his voice reminded me of the welcome that a large trusty curly-haired retriever accords the household guest. "That's what we try to get. Now, please, Captain Mackenzie, my sister, Mrs. Koumpas, my brother John, and my sister-in-law wish you to consider this your own house while you are remaining in Mytilene. For us to be able to entertain a British officer at this moment is such a tremendous privilege that we hardly know how to make enough of it."

Inside, this ivy-covered vicarage was full of comfortable furniture; and, with maids in caps and aprons bringing in a prodigal English tea, with sleek cats and plump dogs wandering about, with that cage of canaries in the big bay-window, with those bowls of pot-pourri and deep chintz-covered chairs, I began to ask myself if I was really in the Isle of Lesbos still, or if I had not been transported by sorcery to the Isle of Wight.

Mrs. Koumpas was a bright-eyed woman who must have been a great beauty and had that air of being used to men's falling in love with her which is so attractive in a woman whose wisdom and wit have ripened like lovely fruits, though the blossom of her Spring may long have fallen. She was the Mary of the household, sitting back and entertaining the guest with tales of a cosmopolitan life and a romantic ancestry, the illustrations of which latter might be seen in various portraits on the walls. I remember one in particular—an exquisite miniature of a slim young man in a tight-waisted, many-buttoned, brilliant uniform, wearing a high stock and a tall scarlet fez. This was a great-grandfather, I think, who had held a position at the Sultan's Court and had been made Prince of Samos, ruling there in practical

independence. I remember that this bright miniature hung beside the mantelpiece and that while I was gazing at it Aristarchi, indifferent to his ancestor's Byronic grace, leaned forward to point out with pride the open English fireplace. I believe if the cicalas had not been ratcheting outside in defiance of the English air within he would actually have lighted the fire in order to gratify a quite imaginary homesickness on my part. And at the same time Mrs. Koumpas—Betsy she was called—thought I was admiring the ivory handle and golden filagree of an Egyptian horse-hair fly-whisk which hung below the miniature. At once she unhooked it and insisted on my accepting it as a present. I was already wearing a commonplace fly-whisk attached to my Sam Brown.

"Now you must still have one more," she told me, with her attractive laugh. "And then you will be a Pasha with three tails."

The Martha of this delightful household was Mrs. John Aristarchi, a grave woman with a pale oval face, who poured out tea and eyed the movements of the maids. She and her sister-in-law ruled John sternly. 'John will do this.' 'John will do that.' 'John can bicycle into Mytilene after tea and fetch it.' John was a little deaf, but whether it was on account of that or because he did not speak English so fluently and therefore preferred to speak French that he was sometimes alluded to as 'Poor John' I do not know. However, John himself, though he might be ordered about by his wife and sister and occasionally be treated by his brother with a somewhat boisterous patronage, was indubitably one of the leading citizens of Mytilene, and when it came to getting an opinion on any matter of real importance it was always John who was asked; and it was John, as I remember, who sat at the head of the table when we had one of those wonderful Sunday lunches and when Aristarchi Bey himself, full of smiles sat inhaling the authentic whiff

of English air that the entry of a great sirloin of roast beef brought into that dining-room, on the walls of which I would not swear that there did not hang steel engravings after Landseer.

Aristarchi's pleasure when Heathcote-Smith and I confided in him the secret of our proposed attack on Smyrna was of course intense, and he gave me about the most exhausting two days I have ever spent in surveying possible sites for camps.

I still have the original draft of my letter to Deedes on the subject, which I took care to leave about several times on the table of my room after having taken equal care to cover it up hurriedly whenever anybody came in. I print it now, partly because it gives some idea of the topography of Mytilene, and partly out of vanity.

*C/o.*
*C. E. Heathcote-Smith, Esq.,*
*Mytilene.*

*July 20th*, 1915.

*Sir:*

*I have the honour to report to you the preliminary observations I have made of ground suitable for a camp for two or even three Divisions of troops.*

*Bearing in mind the ultimate objective of such a camp, I find that the only feasible site lies south of the town of Mytilene (Castro). It begins on the map you have of the Aivalik section of Asia Minor at a point just below Varia, and finishes just below Agrilia. The map, however, is futile and inaccurate.*

*The frontage is roughly 6 kilometres with an average depth of 300 metres. Of course this depth by cutting down the olive-groves at the back could be indefinitely extended. The ground available mostly consists of rough pasturage, here and there cultivated for maize, marrows, and various vegetables. It is backed by a range of hills and faced by a road (Boulevard*

*Venizelos) which runs by the sea's edge. This road, I understand, could for an expenditure of £1,000 be made first class. At present it is passable for a motor-car, but would not stand heavy transport.*

*I have tried all the available water and have found existing springs of the finest quality. At* NEAPOLIS, *the point at which the suggested camp would begin, there is a spring which gives* 18 *cubic metres daily. Here was lately the Aerodrome* used by the Royal Naval Flying Section.*

*At* ARGALA *is a spring of* 30 *cubic metres daily. At* MANONI'S CHIFTLIK *rented by Margoni is a spring of* 70 *cubic metres daily. At* RIZA PASHA'S CAFE *one of* 40 *cubic metres daily, and at* SKAMPAVIA *one of* 50 *cubic metres daily.*

*This gives without digging fresh wells a total of* 208 *cubic metres daily. All these estimates are based on the lowest possible flow. In reality they will probably yield much more.*

*Besides these, at* KRATIGOS *there is water which belongs to the town of Mytilene and to Riza Pasha, but which has not been brought into use. Here one can count on a supply of* 200 *metres daily. Lack of pipes prevented its canalization and there would be no objection to our using this water, particularly if we used six-inch pipes and bequeathed them afterwards to the town. The distance to canalize is roughly one mile and a quarter. Three-inch pipes would on account of the head be useless to the town. The land about* KRATIGOS *belongs to Riza Pasha, ex-Minister of War in Turkey. There are several good houses upon it including the Pasha's summer villa now partially let to the Austrian Consul, a Greek called Andreas, who is a very malevolent enemy of ours. Fuel and wood will be found in the greatest abundance immediately behind, and the climate is very healthy.*

*The main objection to the site is the disembarkation and the embarkation of the troops. The water is very shallow for from*

*More Alice Through the Looking Glass mentality.

*100-200 metres out, and there are no piers or jetties. At 50 metres out 5 or 6 feet of water can generally be reckoned upon. I understand that piers could be built from local wood, but of course they would be useless after September when the weather changes.*

*The Gulf of Iero now in our occupation is ideal for embarkations, but the flat lands possible for a camp are all malarial, and the rest is very steep. The difficulty might be solved by prolonging the road, which comes to an end just by the proposed southern boundary of the camp, round Malea Point to where the metalled road comes down from the town of Mytilene. Or it might be considered feasible to march the troops over a distance of about 8 miles by the existing road. There is also an obsolete road of about 3 or 4 miles in length leading directly from the camp over the hills to where the ships lie. This could be made passable for heavy transport with three weeks' work at an expenditure of not more than £2,000. The question of these roads would be one for an N.T.O. and an engineer to decide after consultations on the spot.*

*The matter of the contracts and tenders for supplies is being satisfactorily dealt with.*

*Other camping places on the island are all too small, and the position I have indicated appears to be not only the best, but also the only one possible.*

*I will add that all my observations have been corroborated by an engineer who has himself carried out all water works and road contracts done in this island for the last twenty-five years.*

*I have the honour to be, sir,*
*Your obedient servant,*
*Compton Mackenzie,*
*Capt. R.M.*

Yes, it was an exhausting business to obtain in a couple of days all the information set down in that letter; but

there was one spot whither Aristarchi and I came in our search for possible camping sites which was as near my notion of Paradise as any I have seen. We reached it after walking along a series of narrow paths through immense fields of maize. The water for which we were looking was gathered in a big open cistern over which dragon-flies were darting and hovering, some blue, some grey and green, and some orange-scarlet of the same hue as the goldfish swimming in the tank and the blossom of a gnarled pomegranate-tree whose boughs swept over the mossy sides. Half a dozen delightfully courteous children brought us bunches of sweet basil, and after our business was done we were invited to rest in the family courtyard beneath the shade of a trellised vine. We sat on the gay pillows that were carried out for us from the dim interior of the cottage, and while we watched the wife at her loom the husband broke open for us a large water melon ; and as I buried my teeth in its taut rosy flesh or brushed away the cool ebony seeds that clung to my lips I dreamed that there was no war. Indeed one could have dreamed here of more incredible things than peace, as for example that time had stood still in this blessed spot where the unbroken murmur of gurgling water created a perpetual present, so changeless was the rhythm of its music upon that warm fig-tree-scented air about which those brilliant insects darting achieved an equally changeless pattern of jewelled motion. Nor did the more distant scene betray this illusion of escape from time, for two miles beyond a green level of lush-growing maize the Ægean lay like marble and the coast of Asia floated in ethereal mists above another changeless pattern of fantastic white sails.

Fortunately I was not called upon to desecrate this spot by inflicting a camp upon it ; and I like to think that as I write these words the water there is still playing a timeless melody, that the orange-scarlet dragon-flies still dart and

hover above their mossy cistern, that the goldfish still seem to be swimming among the orange-scarlet blossoms of the pomegranate mirrored therein, that the Ægean still lies like marble beyond those fields of maize, that the children have never grown up, and that the pattern on the housewife's loom is not yet woven and complete.

After the way Aristarchi and I had been seen scouring the countryside for water it would have been strange if rumour had not kilted her skirts and careered round Mytilene at high speed. There was no need for me to inquire cautiously about the prospect of obtaining supplies for these mythical Divisions. Wherever I went I was met by obsequious gentlemen anxious to be given contracts. I remember one in particular who wanted to obtain a monopoly for the supply of wood.

"I wish no more than your promise, Capitaine, that you will speak with favour of my name if tenders are asked for."

"But even supposing these troops are coming, which I can assure you they are not," I said, "it would be useless for me to promise you anything in the way of a contract. These matters are not arranged by me."

We were sitting opposite to one another over the table in my bedroom, and I was aware beneath it of an insinuating crackle of paper. Presently a hand appeared with a couple of thousand-drachma notes, and played Up Jenkins with them on the table for a few minutes.

"I would not be so ignorant for bribe you, Capitaine," the petitioner said at last. "But I would like for give you one present. It is for me quite the same. You take it, and if you can speak good words for me when the soldiers will come I am content."

I shook my head, and a third note, this time for five-hundred drachmas was added to the others.

"I beg you must take this," the petitioner pressed. "And if I may not have the contract it will be because you

cannot make it for me. But you will say good words, and I am so glad you can have this little present."

An hour afterwards a baker was in my room on the same mission. He offered up to five thousand drachmas for nothing but a promise to say that he was known in Mytilene as a good baker. And there were several others. I shall never again have such a field for working the confidence-trick with profit and impunity. The more earnestly I insisted to my suitors that no troops were coming to Mytilene, the more earnestly they begged me to take their money. They were even ready to sign statements to the effect that they had forced the money on me in spite of my unwillingness to accept it. I believe that, had I been inclined, I could have gone away from the island with as much as a couple of thousand pounds.

Heathcote-Smith was bitterly scornful when I told him about these overtures.

"You and your sanatorium! Why, the news of our landing is in Smyrna by now," he jeered.

"No, I don't think so, Heathcote. I think that by not accepting any bribes I have convinced these fellows that there really is nothing in it."

"I thought novelists were supposed to be judges of character?"

"Ah, that's where *your* simplicity begins, Heathcote. But even if our proposed landing were being talked about in Mytilene, it would not mean that information of it had reached the Turks. Your contre-espionage organization will see to stopping that."

"It would if I were given an opportunity," said Heathcote-Smith. "But I'm not. I have asked repeatedly for the expulsion of the Müller gang; but no attention is paid to my warnings, and with the funds at my disposal I can do nothing."

Müller was the German Consul in Mytilene and as such

he was doing for his country, comparatively restricted though the sphere of his activity, the same work as Heathcote-Smith was doing for his. The long catalogue of his alleged misdeeds have passed from my recollection ; but I know that he was supposed to finance one of the local papers to print tendencious news, and that he and his son and an individual called Fraz lived with two female typists in a house close to the quay and next door to the Police Station. Andreas, the malevolent Austrian Consul, spent most of his time with them, and one or two other pro-German Levantines whose names I have forgotten. They owned a motor-boat and we considered it highly suspicious that they should often be going for ostensible pleasure trips in it all together. I may seem to be treating their nefarious activities somewhat lightly after fourteen years ; but at the time I was as deeply impressed as Heathcote-Smith by their sinister existence with two female typists next door to the Police Station and by those ostensible pleasure trips all together in that motor-boat of theirs.

" There goes the Müller gang," Heathcote-Smith used to mutter.

And I would stand by his side and gaze ferociously out to sea at that overloaded craft. Indeed, Heathcote-Smith and I used to stand at the window and chatter at them like a couple of cats at half a dozen sparrows out of reach. Their presence in Mytilene was a continual sneer at Britannia's nautical rule, we felt ; and on my return to G.H.Q. I drew up a memorandum on the possible methods of eliminating enemy agents from the islands off the coast of Asia Minor. Here it is :

## MÜLLER GANG AT MYTILENE

Submit that the gang at Mytilene known as the Müller gang is a serious menace to our Intelligence.

The gang consists of Heinrich Müller, the German Vice-

Consul; his son Henri, a Belgian subject; Andreas, a Greek, the Austrian Consul; Arturo Esposito, an Italian subject, Commissionaire of the Italian Consulate; Franz Fraz, a Hungarian photographer; and two German female typists.

They have probably bought two of our Consulate Officials. They are in touch with the Civil Governor through the paper called "LESBOS," which receives within a few hours all the Governor's confidential information. They are also in touch with the Telegraph Office and Posts.

Submit further that there is probably a wireless installation.

Submit finally that an attempt should be made to break up this gang, suggestions for doing which are appended:

## THE ELIMINATION OF ENEMY AGENTS FROM THE ISLANDS

### A. MÜLLER GANG AT MYTILENE.

The two Müllers, Fraz, and two typists live in a house close to the quay, but next to the Police Station. Andreas spends most of his time there, sometimes sleeping. Esposito (who will probably leave immediately for the Italian front) is often there.

They have a Motor Boat in which from time to time they make pleasure trips *all together*. Formerly various members of the organization used to travel often to CHIOS, SAMOS, CAVALLA, SALONICA, etc. This has not been observed lately.

THERE ARE FOUR WAYS OF DEALING WITH THIS GANG:

I. BY CONTRE-ESPIONAGE.

PROS.

(1) The advantage of gleaning German news.

(2) The avoidance of international complications owing to the Consular status of the objects.

CONS.

(1) The difficulty of guaranteeing a genuine service from our contre-espionage owing to the prodigality of German finance for their Secret Service.

(2) The difficulty of communicating the information in time to make it of any use.

(3) The extra work entailed in organization.

2. BY KIDNAPPING FROM MYTILENE ITSELF.

PROS.

(1) The absolute certainty of securing all the gang.

(2) The sudden paralysis of the central bureau.

CON.

(1) The danger of international complications.

3. BY LURING THE GANG FROM MYTILENE, ARRESTING THEM AT SEA, AND INTERNING THEM.

PRO.

(1) The avoidance of international complications.

CONS.

(1) The grave difficulty of securing all the gang.

(2) The guarantee even of partial success.

(3) The length of time possibly involved.

4. BY LURING THE GANG FROM MYTILENE AND RUNNING THEM DOWN WITH A PATROL BOAT.

PRO.

(1) The avoidance of complications by taking refuge in the plea of accidental death.

CONS.

(1) The difficulty of making the above plea plausible.

(2) The objections that are given above to plan 3.

B. With regard to Chios and Samos the probability is that kidnapping from the Islands themselves will be the only possible way, as the various agents are more scattered.

PROPOSAL

Submit that with the help of a Ketch specially allotted to this service, and by the expenditure of the sum of 10,000 francs it would be possible to kidnap everybody who threatens our interests. Ketch should be placed at the disposal of G.H.Q.(I) for one month, but submit it could be used for ordinary patrol work until the critical moment.

Gangs will be brought to K Beach and afterwards interned for the rest of the War.

ADVANTAGES

(1) The paralysis of the hostile organization while the heads are still comparatively concentrated and within reach.
(2) The value of this to our S.S. work in the event of moving forward from Gallipoli.
(3) The destruction of the hostile submarine organization.
(4) The lightening of the contraband work.
(5) The greater security of our information.

*Compton Mackenzie*,
Lt. R.M.

G.H.Q. (Ib)
6th August, 1915.

This brief memorandum had in its way a kind of Edgar Wallace success at G.H.Q. People used to ask me if they could borrow it to read in bed, such rumours of its bloodthirsty nature had run round the camp. Months later, when whatever damage the Müller gang and other similar organizations could do had long been done, measures not unlike these which so much amused my brother officers were actually adopted by the Navy; and I believe that when in 1917 I incorporated Mytilene in my system of

Ægean Port Control we actually used the sinister house of the Müller gang for our harbour office. I may call attention to the variety of nationalities involved. Out in the Levant one was as likely to discover a friend owning nominal allegiance to Austria as an enemy who might be technically a Belgian. The passport problem there was four times as difficult as anywhere else in the world.

In spite of Heathcote-Smith's conviction that the Müllers were a menace to allied interests I did not feel that the quality of their espionage was good enough to convince General Liman von Sanders of our serious intention to land a large force in Asia Minor ; another plan to impress him was forming in my mind. Meanwhile I told Heathcote-Smith that I intended to do what I could to close the channels of information by applying a particularly rigid censorship to the telegrams of *The Times* correspondent in Mytilene.

"You can hardly do that without violating neutrality," he objected, the Consul in him suddenly getting the better of the ruthless Intelligence Officer.

"We'll see," I muttered darkly.

Few readers of *The Times* to-day will remember those four or five line contributions from Our Special Correspondent in Mytilene which throughout the Spring of 1915 supplied an intermittent stream of rumour about the offensive in the Ægean. And that is a pity, because they had the charm of a well-run children's corner in their fairy-like remoteness from actuality. Our Special Correspondent was a small man with a sallow face that seemed the sallower for the vivid pink cotton-wool he habitually wore in his ears, and his voice always gave the impression that he had just finished eating an exceptionally dry cracknel biscuit. Hot though it was in Mytilene that July, he was dressed in a Norfolk suit of brown tweed, and he existed in a state of sartorial doubt about the way to wear stockings with

knickerbockers. In the pre-plus-fours period the disposal of the tops often worried the scholar dressed as a sportsman, and Our Special Correspondent favoured wearing them inside the tight box-cloth prolongation. He owned a not less romantic past than many others in that exciting part of the world; but of late years he had cultivated a farm near the ruins of Troy, where he had entertained the many distinguished scholars and archæologists who had come to contemplate and explore the few fragments of the epic scenes that were still discernible. To see him as I saw him first at dinner with his wife in the dining-room of the rival hotel to the Grande Bretagne, one would never have guessed that his home was hard by what few stones remained of the towers of Ilion. The wife was fulgid and tremendous. Beside her he looked like a rather small cigar in a broad and brilliantly gilded paper band. I fancy she was a Greek. Before the war he must have been the special correspondent of *The Times* for Troy, and indeed I seem to remember a series of well-written and interesting articles by him about the birds and beasts of that enchanted neighbourhood. When war broke out he had to leave his farm and, instead of writing a column about the latest excavations, he was driven to telegraphing snippets of rumour from Mytilene. He took the responsibility of these telegrams most seriously; but they were of course so entirely devoid of importance as not to perplex even the muddle-headed censors of 1915. And this was to be the next victim of the military machine.

I asked him round to my hotel, where I broke to him the news that in future any telegrams he proposed to send to his paper must first be submitted to me for censorship.

"There are reasons for this action by the military authorities," I assured him. "I cannot tell you those reasons; but I must ask you to accept my word that we should not take such a drastic step unless we considered it of vital importance to the military situation."

"Mytilene of course is a neutral island," he suggested tentatively.

"You are implying that I have no right to put your Press telegrams under censorship?"

"Well, it does seem a little high-handed."

"Does not the very high-handedness of my action indicate to you the grave necessity for it at this juncture?" I asked solemnly.

He bowed his head. I could see that a sharp struggle was being waged within that little man's brown Norfolk suit. I could see that not for the first time patriotism and the Press were in conflict. I could see that for all his pastoral existence of many years on the plains of Troy, his study of the Homeric flora and fauna, his gentle companionship with famous scholars, he was at this moment the prey to an almost overwhelming temptation to bring off a journalistic scoop.

"You mean to say you desire to see every telegram I may send to *The Times*?"

"And delete anything I may think advisable."

"Oh, well," he said at last as he figuratively sat down in Britannia's lap and sent the Editor of *The Times* at the other end of the see-saw ignominiously up into the air: "Oh, well, I'll show you any telegrams I wish to send." And then with a deep romantic sigh he added reverently: "I suppose we all have to do our bit."

His voice was always full of crumbs, but never before had he had to swallow quite such a large or quite such a dry cracknel biscuit as just before he decided on that sunny Lesbian morning to do his bit in the Great War by submitting to my blue pencil those snippets of rumour, the despatch of which I realized he must be supposing of more importance than the discovery of lost hexameters from the Iliad.

And now, having as I hoped planted in the mind of

*The Times* correspondent a belief that great events were toward, which belief I trusted his manner would convey by a consciousness of being almost the only receptacle of a solemn secret, I decided to take a step that in my opinion would be more likely than any to sow uneasiness in the German mind about our intentions with regard to Asia Minor

So on Monday morning, the nineteenth of July, I asked Heathcote-Smith if he would take me up to the Castle that afternoon in order that I might pay a formal call on the Nomarch, or Civil Governor.

"You see, Heathcote, I'm beginning to feel just a little uncomfortable, walking about here in uniform like this. I should like to leave cards on the Military Commandant and the officers of the garrison; but I can't very well do that unless I leave a card on the Civil Governor first."

"I don't see why you want to do that. He hates us. He's a fierce Gounarist and pro-German. I have been agitating in Athens to have him recalled. It's ridiculous for Venizelos to leave a man like that as Nomarch of an island as much devoted to himself as Mytilene is."

I tried to look taken aback by the news of the Nomarch's political sympathies, though of course I knew already all about them and was counting on him as a Gounarist for the success of my plan. Need I mention that Gounaris was the leader of the party opposed to Venizelos? I want to steer clear of the complications of Greek politics in this volume. We shall have so much of them later on.

"The fact is, Heathcote, I've been thinking matters over since Aristarchi and I went sampling the waters of Mytilene, and I've decided to take the Nomarch into our confidence."

"To do what?" Heathcote-Smith gasped. "You're even more idiotically unsuited for this job than I thought you were. Don't you understand he's a Gounarist and that anything you tell him will immediately be communicated to the German Legation in Athens?"

"Oh, I hardly think if I pay him the compliment of treating him as an honourable man he'll play a dirty trick like that."

"Won't he?"

"Well, I must risk it. I don't feel comfortable here. The consular side of you, Heathcote, ought to tell you how uncomfortable I must feel, wandering about here armed to the teeth and drinking water all over the place with Aristarchi."

"I think you're mad."

"Look here, Heathcote," I said, pretending to be a little annoyed by his obstruction, "I'm sure you won't object to my reminding you that I was entrusted with this job of finding out about camping sites. You'll do me the kindness to remember that I felt the same qualms about deceiving you."

"That's different."

"In a way; but the principle is the same. If I was justified in using my discretion about taking you into my confidence over this business, I am justified in using my discretion over the Nomarch. Anyway, I'm going to tell him, whatever you may say, so if you won't come with me this afternoon, I'll go up to the castle myself."

"Oh, I'll come with you," said Heathcote-Smith quickly. "I may be able to prevent some of the harm that is likely to come from this fantastic idea of yours. But I wish I could persuade you that this kind of public-school behaviour is lost on these people out here."

So that afternoon we walked up to the great Frankish castle on the rocky promontory that separated the two harbours of Mytilene. I say two harbours, but nowadays it is only the southern one which is at all serviceable, and this was formerly included within the walls of the city. It was here that the Athenian fleet under Conon sailing from the north, with the Spartan fleet under Callicratidas in

pursuit, took refuge, for in those days there was a channel through the isthmus on which the business portion of the city now stands.

The castle itself is an abstract of history, and I noticed when we passed through the old iron door of the main entrance a Byzantine eagle and beyond that the coat of arms of the noble Genoese family of Gatilusio who held Lesbos for a century as merchant princes, and beyond that again a Turkish inscription dating perhaps from the year 1462 when the island lamentably fell to Mahomet II. The old castle was an impressive place with its inner and outer walls, its great bastions and angular towers and battlements. It was large enough to house the whole of the garrison and the civil administration, besides providing the Nomarch with a noble residence and magic casements opening on the Ægean foam.

"Once more," said Heathcote-Smith, when we had walked round a sweep of gravel drive, with a round bed of pastel-pale zinnias in the middle of it, and had rung the bell of the Nomarch's front door, "once more I beg you will take my advice and not trust to the honour of a government official."

The Nomarch was an insignificant little man with a pasty porous face, and the room in which we sat was crowded with heavy and gloomy bourgeois furniture quite out of keeping with that magical view from the stone-mullioned windows.

*Mytilene is a city in Lesbos, and by ancient titles of honour it is the great and fair Mytilene. For it is distinguished and divided (the sea flowing in) by a various euripus, and is adorned with bridges built of white polished marble. You would not think you saw a city but an island. From this Mytilene some two hundred furlongs there lay a manor of a certain rich lord, the most sweet and pleasant prospect under all the eyes of heaven. There were mountains*

*stored with wild beasts for game ; there were hills and banks that were spread with vines ; the fields abounded with all sorts of corn ; the valleys with orchards and gardens and purls from the hills ; the pastures with sheep and goats and kine ; the sea-billows, swelling and gushing upon a shore which lay extended along in an open horizon, made a soft magic and enchantment.*

Thus the lovely opening paragraph of Longus, though the original Greek is even more entrancing than the seventeenth-century English prose of George Thornley, Gent., who wrote *Daphnis and Chloe* as a most sweet and pleasant pastoral romance for young ladies, without a word of acknowledgment to the second-century Lesbian author.

The Nomarch was inviting us to drink the formal cup of coffee, and, fetching my soul back from that outer radiance whither it was being led away, I settled down to talk the commonplaces of the moment in official French. Heathcote-Smith's eyes grew larger and more dreamily liquid as in his silkiest voice he kept teasing the political opinions of our host with those little sarcasms which sounded as innocent as the observations of a child.

"*Excellence*," I said at last, "you must have sometimes asked yourself what I was doing in Mytilene."

The Nomarch bowed greasily as if to disown an impertinence, while the lips of Heathcote-Smith began to curl under his heavy dark moustache.

"And it has occurred to me," I went on, "that you may have felt some resentment at my presence here in uniform without offering any explanation of it to yourself. I understand that there has been a leader on the subject in one of the anti-Entente papers in Athens."

This was true. My landing with Darwin in Mytilene had been compared to the German invasion of Belgium in 1914.

The Nomarch gave a sickly smile.

"We are growing accustomed to the rather scant courtesy with which we are treated by our friends."

"The Germans would be more polite," Heathcote-Smith murmured languorously, and the Nomarch darted at him a vicious glance.

"I quite appreciate what his Excellency feels," I interposed soothingly. "I quite appreciate that our casual way of taking everything for granted must occasionally jar on the susceptibilities of our friends, and it is just because I know what a friend his Excellency could be that I am so anxious to remove the slightest cause for misunderstanding."

Then I turned to the Nomarch and said with as much solemnity as I could manage:

"I am going to prove my sincerity by giving you my confidence on a very serious matter. I feel it is unfair you should be left in the dark about a matter of great importance to your Nomarchy. I only ask that you will treat my communication as confidential. *Excellence*, I am here looking for camping sites. Within a short while we are preparing to land forty thousand troops on Mytilene for a purpose which I am not at liberty to divulge, but which I have no doubt a man of your intelligence will find it perfectly easy to guess."

We often hear of people turning pea-green. Well, the Nomarch did not turn exactly pea-green; but his porous face glistened with emotional perspiration, and the colour of it was that yellowy-greenish-grey you see where the yolk of a hard-boiled egg mingles with the white.

"Forty thousand troops?" he gasped. "*Mais c'est inoüi!*"

"Yes, I was afraid the information might come as rather a shock," I said sympathetically.

"Forty thousand troops? Why, I never heard anything so outrageous in my life. *C'est épouvantable!* I must consult with Monsieur Venizelos at once."

"But, *Excellence*," I protested with every appearance of dismay, "you cannot do that. Monsieur Venizelos knows nothing about this plan. The whole thing is a secret. We cannot afford to risk a repetition of what happened when we used the harbour of Mudros. This will be one of the major operations of the war. *Excellence*, I entreat you to respect the confidence I have given you."

"I shall go to Athens to-morrow," the Nomarch cried excitably. "There is a steamer leaving for the Piræus in the morning."

"But you'll get me into terrible trouble," I exclaimed, trying to turn as pale as the Nomarch himself. "My military career will be ruined."

"I regret, *monsieur le capitaine*, that I must put my country before your career. I shall go to Athens to-morrow and ask Monsieur Venizelos if this abominable violation of our sovereign rights is to be made by his authority."

Gounarist venom oozed with his perspiration from the little man's porous face.

"But I tell you Monsieur Venizelos knows nothing about this project. I have no doubt the British Minister in Athens will advise him of our intended action when all further secrecy is impossible, but meanwhile. . . ." I broke off with a sob in my voice. "*Excellence*, I really beg you not to go to Athens."

The Nomarch drew himself up.

"I regret, *monsieur*, that what you ask is outside my favour to grant. I must remember my duty to my country."

"And your political party," added Heathcote-Smith silkily.

"There are some of us who think that the two are not distinguishable," the Nomarch spat forth.

We drank our coffee in an atmosphere of embarrassment, and soon afterward our host ushered us out into his dark entrance-hall. At the front door I made a final appeal to his

unofficial and better nature not to reveal the secret I had so rashly entrusted to him. He was full of apologies, but firm. Nothing should prevent his going to Athens to-morrow morning.

"Now you've done it," said Heathcote-Smith when the door closed behind us and we stood on that sweep of gravel drive, contemplating the lanky zinnias in the big round bed deprived of sunlight by a great clump of evergreen trees beyond.

"Do you really think he means to do what he says?" I asked nervously.

"Of course, he will. You don't suppose a Gounarist official is going to neglect such a chance of a political score? Well, I warned you."

"I know you did, Heathcote. You were right and I was wrong. My god, it's pretty awful."

"There's only one chance," said Heathcote-Smith. "We'll signal him to the Navy as a suspect and get him taken off the boat and detained at Mudros."

I shook my head.

"That would only delay matters for a few hours, and involve us in a worse row ultimately. Damn it, Heathcote, I wish I'd taken your advice. I never dreamed the fellow would not appreciate my good manners. Well, anyway, luckily Venizelos is still in power, and he'll stand by us."

"I daresay he will, but meanwhile the news of our intention to land in Asia Minor will be all over Athens the day after to-morrow."

"Do you really think so? I say, it is rather awful; isn't it?"

"Well, I warned you."

We walked gloomily down through the castle precincts.

"I hope that the amount of saluting you are now getting from the garrison is some compensation for your *gaffe*," said Heathcote-Smith sarcastically.

A few days later two guides from the Cheshme district arrived from the Peninsula, and with them a letter from Deedes to ask what on earth I was doing in Mytilene. He had had rather a job to soothe Sir Ian, he wrote. But everything was now all right. In fact Sir Ian was so pleased with this business that a Brigade was going to be diverted to Port Iero to support the rumour of an Asiatic landing, and Sir Ian himself was probably coming over to Mytilene to add a final touch of colourful probability to the tale.

I never found out what actually did happen after the Nomarch arrived in Athens; but I gathered from Deedes that he had called on Monsieur Venizelos with his horrifying story, whereupon Monsieur Venizelos had put on his hat and walked round to interview Sir Francis Elliot at the British Legation. Later on in the Autumn I saw Sir Francis the prey of strong diplomatic emotion when our Consul-General in Salonica telegraphed to Athens that General Hamilton had landed and occupied the harbour, though of any such military intention to do which he was in complete ignorance. At the time it was naturally supposed in the Legation that General Hamilton was Sir Ian himself, not the R.E. general it turned out to be. I imagine that when Monsieur Venizelos asked him what he knew about the proposed disembarkation of forty thousand troops at Mytilene he suffered a similar shock. The story gathered volume. Legend said that Sir Francis Elliot immediately telegraphed to the Foreign Office to know what was happening, that Sir Edward Grey invited Lord Kitchener to explain the military proposal, that Lord Kitchener despatched one of those telegrams signed 'Troopers' to invite Sir Ian Hamilton to explain, that Sir Ian Hamilton in a fume sent for Deedes to invite *him* to explain, and that Deedes was able to demonstrate to his Commander-in-Chief the true inwardness and subtlety of the matter.

On July 22nd, von Falkenhayn telegraphed from General Headquarters to the German Military Attaché in Constantinople :

*From reports received here it seems probable that at the beginning of August a strong attack will be made on the Dardanelles, perhaps in connection with a landing in the Gulf of Saros or on the coast of Asia Minor. It will be well to economize ammunition.*

Presumably the possibility of this Asia Minor landing was telegraphed to Berlin from Athens the day after the Nomarch arrived from Mytilene. General Liman von Sanders, too, in *Five Years in Turkey*, mentions the rumours about this time from various sources of landings at Smyrna or Aivalik ; it is clear from his book what a state of perplexity he was in about the impending attack. Napoleon said we always saw our own mistakes, but not the mistakes of the enemy. This was the critical moment when that so efficient German High Command decided to recall General Liman von Sanders and replace him by Field Marshal von der Goltz with the Military Attaché, Colonel von Lossow, as his Chief of Staff. However, the gods hostile to our victory intervened, and Liman von Sanders remained at his post.

Heathcote-Smith was very good about what he supposed to be my *gaffe* ; but I could feel he now regarded me as a hopelessly unpractical and tiresomely obstinate creature. Moreover, he had a personal reason for being angry with me, because he thought his own scheme for arming a division of refugee irregulars and turning them loose on the Turks in Asia Minor had been imperilled by my headstrong behaviour. My own belief is that, if Heathcote-Smith could have been given a free hand to put his plan into execution, he might have done a great deal more damage to the Turks

than ever Lawrence did with his Arabs. However, this would be a barren controversy on which to enter. But these refugees were a terrible problem and a perpetual heartache. There were eighty thousand of them in Mytilene, and the civic resources were incapable of dealing with such a multitude. Ten thousand had come over from Aivalik alone, and when one thought of the fate with which those who remained were threatened by the bloody Turk, even the misery of their present lot seemed preferable.

I have perhaps written enough in a vain endeavour to convey the beauty of Mytilene, of the encircling orchards and wooded hills, of the public gardens pine-scented, of the quiet byways behind the noisy quayside and prosperous business quarter, quiet orderly rows of yellow or tawny houses with green jalousies and profuse morning-glory flowing across the brown-tiled roofs and over the sun-coloured walls like a stream of sapphires, of the Turkish quarter with its minarets and fountains and market of globed fruits, of the disused northern harbour where Callicratidas and his Spartan sailors lay and where the old sea-mole mentioned by Strabo was crumbling into final ruin, of that serene marriage between earth and sea here so perfectly consummated. But round every corner, in every small open space, by the roadside, in the fields, beneath the olive-trees, even on the beach by the water's edge there were the refugees. They were not allowed inside the public gardens; but they clung to the rails all round them or sat huddled on the pavement at their base in such swarms that they somehow lost their humanity and turned into the semblance of locusts. There was nowhere one could walk but a small emaciated hand would pluck at one's sleeve and point mutely to an empty hungry mouth. Once a woman dropped dead on the pavement in front of me from starvation, and once a child. No street was hot enough to dispel that chill of death. There were, of course, many

organized camps ; but it was impossible to cope with this ever increasing influx of pale fugitives. The odour of persecuted humanity hung upon the air in a miasma ; white exhausted women suckled their babies in the dust ; withered crones dragged from their beds and taken across that radiant sea to escape the brutish Turk sat nursing their ulcers ; broken-hearted old men bowed their heads between their knees ; the wailing of hungry children never ceased. I saw one child sucking the raw head of a hen and another on all fours scraping its fingers along the cracks of the paving-stones for nourishment. But it was those emaciated little hands which touched one timidly in passing that harrowed the mind most of all. Small wonder Heathcote-Smith should desire to arm the fathers of these children and turn them loose upon the Turks. But it was not to be. The 'No' principle was growing stronger all the time. And every day from Aivalik and other towns along the coast came the rumour that next week the inhabitants were to be driven far into the interior, some to die by the wayside, some to be spitted by Turkish bayonets, some to drag out their lives in remote Turkish harems, with the mountains until death rising between them and the sea.

Yet the arrival of one more refugee to swell that haggard multitude could be touched by romance. Two days after our visit to the Nomarch the *Omala* picked up a woman with a baby at her breast floating in a wash-tub far out on the moonlit water. Her husband had been taken by the Turks, and she had risked her life in this queer craft to escape from the horror of the inland. I thought of Danaë with the baby Perseus floating away from Argos in that chest, and of Dictys, the royal fisherman, greeting them upon the strand of Seriphos.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE VASSILAKI FAMILY

THE sufferings of the refugees, the departure of the Nomarch to Athens, the censorship imposed upon the *Times* correspondent, Heathcote-Smith's conviction of my incompetence were presently subordinated to the great Vassilaki mystery, the curtain for the second act of which was rung up by the receipt of this telegram from Thompson, who had been asked to send along Yanni Vassilaki at the first opportunity :

*Following arriving by Goudi steamer. Vassilaki the elder with three sisters. Have failed induce Vassilaki but young girl going to you. Further passenger is Evangelist Aladdin alias Caradlsia agent of Andreas. Vedova brings letter by same steamer.*

At least this was the way Darwin, who was acting as my secretary, deciphered it ; but the sentence with the pleasant news of the young girl's arrival turned out when I examined it to read : *Have failed induce Vassilaki the younger to join you.*

But who the Evangelist Aladdin was we never found out. If the work he had to do in Mytilene was fell, he did it without hindrance from us under some alias more impenetrable than the two provided for him by the code. Of course like every other name in connection with my work the Evangelist Aladdin had to be entered up in the Newgate Calendar. These black lists of suspects like the address-book of a commercial business were an important item in the

assets of an Intelligence Bureau, and there was much rivalry between the chief centres all round the world over which of them could publish the largest and most carefully documented Black Lists. So when I was providing material for them in Athens during 1916 and in the Cyclades during 1917, wistful inquiries would come from Malta or Alexandria or London for further details about the Evangelist Aladdin of whom so little had been found out since he entered my G.H.Q. (1) list in July, 1915. An intriguing personality the Evangelist Aladdin, who thus flits for a moment across the backyard of history. There was another good character of the same kind—one Edward Dear who was reported as a suspect by a French agent in Crete. The evidence against him was that a lady with several pro-German lovers had been overheard to address him as Teddy Dear in a café at Canea. We grew rather tired in Athens of inquiries about Edward or Edwin or Edmund Dear, especially when we found out that his real name was Theodore Ascarides, Teddy being a diminutive and 'dear' a term of affection. But though other centres were willing to add Ascarides to their lists, they were not going to expunge Edward or Edwin or Edmund Dear. That gentleman remained throughout the War, and may perhaps still remain in the dusty archives of some government cellar, as an English adventurer who had successfully outwitted conscription. But perhaps the most elusive figure of all was Hagios Taxiarches who was included in a list of suspected smugglers sent to me from Mudros in 1917, with a demand to know why nothing had been done about putting a stop to their activities. I replied that I should do my best with the means at my disposal to deal with every smuggler mentioned except Hagios Taxiarches, but that for him I should require the help of aircraft. An indignant letter came back from Mudros to say that it was quite impossible to spare any sea-planes for this kind of work. Whereupon I wrote to point out that inas-

much as I had been told to put a stop to the activities of the Archangel Michael I thought my request for the help of air-craft a not unreasonable one. Hagios Taxiarches or the Holy Brigadier is the Greek name for the Blessed Archangel, and it is also a favourite name for boats, his patronage being much esteemed even by smugglers. Of course, what had happened was that a smuggler's boat had crept into the list as the name of another smuggler.

However, to return to the Vassilaki family who were at any rate not such Boojums of the underworld of war. The telegram from Thompson was sent on July 23rd. On the following night the *S.S. Macedonia* reached Mytilene, too late, however, for the passengers to go ashore on arrival. I was disabled by a sharp attack of sciatica, so I was not sorry to hear that they would remain on board. Early on the Sunday morning, being July 25th, Heathcote-Smith's secretary, Mr. Zecchini, and Solon, his general utility man, went down to meet the passengers. I gave orders that Vedova was to come up at once to the hotel and that the members of the Vassilaki family were to be taken somewhere until I could interview them. As soon as Vedova saw me lying on the bed, he wanted to begin a course of massage, and when I crushed that idea he became voluble over the large number of spies he had discovered on board the *Macedonia*.

"Never mind about the other spies," I told him irritably. "The Vassilaki family will keep us busy enough for the present."

"But they will soon be gone to Athens. They will go to the Piræus when the *Macedonia* will leave Mytilene. They have not come ashore."

"Go to the Piræus? But they have only permission from Tenedos to land here."

Vedova shrugged his shoulders, twisted his moustaches, and assumed an attitude of conspiratorial scorn for every

conspirator except himself. His protruding globular eyes were glazed with an expression of sinister derision as he stood with folded arms at the head of my bed and nodded his mandarin-like head.

"Don't stand there blithering! Why didn't you tell me at once they intended to give us the slip?"

"Captain Mackenzie, Mr. Thompson must always treat me like dirt, and that is the truth. He has said nothing to me that I must watch Vassilaki, because he has wished to degrade me in all ways which can be possible. Since I am in Tenedos he has treated me with such haughty disgustingness that my heart is quite sick inside me. It is perhaps not all Mr. Thompson's fault, because he is always listening to that Manoli, a man whose head is full of beans and who is yellow with jealousy for me because he can never find any spies at all nowhere, but I can find hundreds everywhere."

Here he paused for breath, and I told him to get back to the steamer immediately and insist on the Vassilakis' landing. No sooner had Vedova pranced off than Zecchini arrived with the news that Stavro Vassilaki had gone ashore with a parcel and a packet of letters.

"Was he followed?"

"I told Solon to follow him."

I sighed. Solon was a dear amiable creature, but as stupid as a dodo. He could not have followed a coffin and been certain of reaching the right grave.

"Solon!"

Zecchini now began to shrug his shoulders. He too suffered from a conviction that his ability, energy, and devotion were not appreciated.

"I can only carry out the instructions given to me by Mr. Heathcote-Smith," he said, with a suggestion that if he were allowed to manage these affairs for himself they would never go wrong.

Presently Vedova returned with Stavro Vassilaki and his three sisters, Marika, Calliope, and Atalanta. I found that the beauty of these young women, which had become a siren legend by now among the Islands, had been much exaggerated. Marika and Calliope were thickset and spinsterish, all stays and bombasine, while their complexions naturally muddy had not been improved by the voyage from Tenedos. Atalanta, the youngest, was not bad-looking; but she too was waxy and sallow. Stavro Vassilaki, who was the same type of American Greek as his younger brother Yanni, was so full of raucous swagger at first that I had to be rather rude to him. This set his sisters off chattering in his defence. I ordered them to be quiet, whereupon they began to weep and were led out into the corridor by Vedova, whose face had taken on the expression of an old family nurse.

"Look here, Mr. Vassilaki, this kind of behaviour is going to get you into trouble," I told Stavro, who was sitting back in my armchair with an attempt at sulky nonchalance. "Where's your brother?" I asked him angrily. "He applied for a post in the British service. I told him to come to Mytilene, and you arrive instead, or rather you ask for a pass to Mytilene and calmly propose to go on to the Piræus."

"You can't stop me going to the Piræus," said Vassilaki insolently.

"Can't I? Very well, my friend, you'd better try to go there. Only, if you do, I warn you that something most unpleasant may happen to you. You seem to forget that the moment you leave this harbour you'll render yourself liable to arrest."

"Arrest?"

"Arrest."

"Arrest by who?"

"By a British ship."

He pondered this eventuality for a moment or two and then changed his truculent manner for one of servility.

"Well, what do you want me to do, Captain?" he asked, rubbing his hands.

"You'll stay here, at any rate till the next boat, while I make inquiries."

"But I got business in Athens."

"Why did you ask for a pass for Mytilene then?"

He was silent.

"And why didn't your brother Yanni come as he promised?"

"I cannot speak for my brother, Captain."

In the pain I was fighting I could not concentrate properly upon my questions. I told him to go and wait in the corridor while I was deciding what to do about his immediate future. My idea was to hand him over to Heathcote-Smith for a searching examination in his own language. Two minutes after Vassilaki had left my room, Vedova came prancing in, his long drooping waxed moustaches waving with excitement like the antennæ of a lobster.

"Captain, Captain, Vassilaki is now in the W.C. and I can hear him tearing up letters like a mad bull. Can I have your authorities for break the door? Mr. Zecchini is listening to the keyhole, and he is tearing up papers with furiousness. But I say what is the damn good to listen? Only Mr. Zecchini says, 'No, we cannot break the door.' This man is stubborn like a pig and cowardly like a grasshopper."

However, Vedova's more forward policy was rendered unnecessary by the sudden re-appearance of Stavro Vassilaki himself, and, Heathcote-Smith arriving at the same moment, I handed him over for examination and retired to lie down. Besides the neuritis I had been having intermittent dysentery, and was feeling pretty rotten. Darwin was ill too, and that morning, while he was helping me to put on my Sam Brown, I remember our knees were so

groggy that after several vain attempts to fasten it we both collapsed into chairs and sat staring at one another helplessly.

After his examination of Vassilaki, Heathcote-Smith came in to tell me that he was convinced he was a genuine spy and that he thought the best plan was to let him leave to-morrow morning on the *Macedonia* and have him arrested at sea. By this time I was in such pain that I did not care what happened to him. Meanwhile, the amiable but half-witted Solon had taken Vedova to the house where he said Vassilaki had left some letters on first landing. Whether it was the right house or not, the inhabitants denied indignantly that anybody had left a packet of letters there. So Vedova pranced back to ask my authority to break in and search the house and its inhabitants at the point of the pistol.

" I shall strip them all naked," he announced. " That is the only way I can have these letters."

His eyes rolled like an angry wizard's ; and when I tried to explain that some of the amenities of neutrality must be preserved he said he at last understood how ill I must be feeling. Later on he came back much more cheerful to say he had found an elderly female clairvoyant who as soon as I was better was anxious to have a séance in the course of which she hoped to be able to give me the exact whereabouts of a German submarine.

I spent a wretched afternoon of terrific heat and pain, trying to write my contribution to the Vassilaki dossier which was to be forwarded to G.H.Q. with the prisoner.

That evening I asked Heathcote-Smith to fetch a doctor and showed him Jack Higgins's note on my case. He returned with a nice little blinking doctor, a native of Lampsacus where the Garden God came from, who gave me an injection and sat beside the bed to see how it worked, uttering the while a long string of inanities in tinny French.

The pain grew worse and worse instead of better, and I asked the doctor how much morphia he had given me. He told me ' half a grain '. This was depressing news, because until now half a grain had always been enough. So I told him he would have to give me another half grain, and blinking ceaselessly he gave me a second injection. It had no effect, and I was presently in such agony that my temperature began to rise. The doctor stood looking down at me, blinking compassionately.

" Look here, you must stop this pain," I gasped. " Give me a grain."

So he gave me a third injection. Not a sign of alleviation ! The spasms of pain were now ghastly beyond words, and after watching me for another few minutes the little blinking doctor suddenly burst into tears.

" I am very sorry," he said in French. " But I have not yet given you any morphine. Monsieur Ettecotte-Smeet has told me that I must only give you water, because it is not good for you to have morphine. But now I will give it."

And then we had to make a long calculation with the help of the minute print in Belot's Pocket Dictionary to express grains in terms of grammes and find out how many of them went to half a grain. Anyway, this time the drug worked, and in five minutes I had relief from torture. The little blinking doctor was much upset by his earlier treatment of me, and we became good friends. He had had a beautiful young sister of fourteen carried off by the Turks into the interior, and he wept again when he told me the horrifying tale. He said that she would be put into some harem, and that he must never expect to hear of her again. The story told me by my doctor on that long hot night in Mytilene still haunts me. I see again the Keating's powder on my sheets caked into a paste by my sweat. I hear again the noisy clatter of the guests on the terrace, for none of

them went to bed before three. But more vividly I see the expression in the blinking eyes of the little doctor, and more vividly I hear the tone of his voice as he says in his tinny French :

"*Elle était tellement jolie. Mieux si la fillette avait été laide.*"

Heathcote-Smith soon got over his mild attack of consulitis, for to that must be ascribed his experiment of injecting cold water to assuage agony. Perhaps he thought my visit to the Nomarch was clear evidence of a propensity for drugs. Anyway, my disabled condition allowed him to take full charge of the Vassilaki case.

On the morning of the twenty-sixth of July the *Macedonia* left Mytilene. A few miles out she was stopped by *H.M.S. Honeysuckle*, and brought into Port Iero. Heathcote-Smith reached the sloop at half-past four in the afternoon and found Stavro Vassilaki under guard. The officer who had made the arrest handed over some documents and said that the prisoner had tried to pass under a false name. When asked why the certificates and papers of nationality varied Stavro declared that they belonged to his brother Yanni. Heathcote-Smith had the prisoner removed to the *Omala* and then in the presence of one of the *Honeysuckle's* lieutenants he searched the Vassilaki luggage on board the *Macedonia*. The cabin, too, was searched carefully, but without result. After this Heathcote-Smith had a short conversation with the three sisters ; but the only fact he got out of them was that they had a number of friends in Mytilene, whereas the prisoner had declared he knew nobody in Mytilene except Vedova. The sisters were cool and unconcerned until the *Omala* was getting ready to leave for the shore, when Calliope, the second of them, wept for a while. Stavro Vassilaki was taken to the *Canopus* under arrest, and the three sisters went on to the Piræus in the *Macedonia*, which was calling on the way at Kastro in the

island of Lemnos. Heathcote-Smith put a young man on board who was to do his best to make up to the sisters on the way to the Piræus. However, the sisters decided at Kastro to return to Mytilene, and as for Heathcote-Smith's agent he was arrested by the British Naval authorities and taken to Mudros. This may strike the reader as odd; but I have already pointed out that it was far easier for the agents of the enemy to move freely about among the Fighting Forces than for our own agents, who if they escaped arrest by the Military usually fell to the Navy, while the few that survived both were always accounted for by the French. I shall have one or two stories about that when my memories are focussed on the year 1917, and when the Salonica Army was wrestling with the Eastern Mediterranean Squadron for supremacy in Intelligence.

Here is the examination of Stavro Vassilaki in the *Canopus* on the day after his arrest:

*Question.* What is your exact name?

*Answer.* Stavro Vassiliou Xanthaki.

*Q.* Why did you call yourself Vassilaki?

*A.* Because they made a mistake with my name in America.

*Q.* How old are you?

*A.* Thirty.

*Q.* What subject?

*A.* Greek.

*Q.* When did you leave America?

*A.* Last Autumn.

*Q.* When did you arrive in Greece?

*A.* In September.

*Q.* To what town did you go?

*A.* To Athens. I was in Athens from September to April without leaving it. All my family including my father and mother, my brother Yanni, my three sisters

Marika, Calliope, and Atalanta, and three younger brothers were with me all the time. We were none of us doing any work. We had two thousand dollars to live on. By April we had about nine hundred dollars left. We went to Tenedos to try to set up a restaurant there. Both my brother and I were in the restaurant business in Jamestown, New York. That was in the year 1911, and the restaurant was the Divan Restaurant, near Market Street.

I went first to Tenedos toward the end of April, and about four weeks later I brought the whole of my family from Athens.

During the first twenty-five days I did nothing about getting a restaurant. After their arrival I approached a man called Constantinides, but failed to come to terms. This took me four days. I then approached two priests, one of whom was a refugee from Asia Minor ; but after two days these negotiations also ended unsuccessfully. We did nothing more about getting a restaurant. Five weeks later my youngest sister Atalanta fell ill, and I brought her to Mytilene. This was about the middle of June. I also brought my mother with me. Five days later we all returned together.

While in Mytilene I purchased eggs, onions, and potatoes to the value of £24 for sale in Tenedos.

While in Mytilene I slept each night at the Hotel Grande Bretagne, my mother and sister being there also.

My sister was taken to the Doctor by her mother. I paid my mother some money for the Doctor's bill.

A week later, about June 22nd, I came back alone by steamer from Tenedos to Mytilene, loaded two sailing boats at Dip in the Gulf of Iero for Tenedos, and returned by steamer. While I was at Mytilene, my brother Yanni came down to see me and returned to Tenedos before I did.

The only purpose of his visit was to hurry me back. He telegraphed to me, but the telegram never reached me.

From that day until now none of us has done any kind of business at Tenedos, although we tried several times to do business.

Our living at Tenedos was costing about ten shillings a day, and we now have about £80 to £90 in hand. Our total income from outside since April was about 60 Napoleons on the two Mytilene transactions.

Our reason for going to Tenedos was solely to make money and save expenses, and it was expected that the whole family would help, because my sisters had worked previously in hotels. .

As regards my journey to Mytilene with my sisters, at the moment of leaving Tenedos I knew nothing of my brother Yanni's having volunteered to work as agent for the British. I myself had never volunteered to work for the British.

I asked for a pass from Tenedos to Mytilene, which was granted me, my three sisters' names being mentioned on it too. I said that the object of my journey to Mytilene was for the benefit of the health of my younger sister Atalanta and for a change of air for the other two. On arrival at Mytilene I tried to go on to the Piræus without disembarking, because once on board my sisters insisted on going to the Piræus.

I did not know that my brother Yanni was expected to come to Mytilene to see Captain Mackenzie, nor did I know that I was. I never asked when at Tenedos to be employed as a secret agent. I deny the fact that I ever asked Lieutenant Thompson or Captain Mackenzie if I could be employed as a secret agent.

On leaving the boat I went to Captain Mackenzie's hotel without previously going to any other house. I did not go anywhere and hand any letters or anything else to anyone. Mr. Vedova, who brought me from the boat, never left my side until my arrival at Captain Mackenzie's hotel. In the hotel, I destroyed no letters at all.

While there I went to the lavatory, but I did not tear up any letters.

A letter addressed to Yorghi and ending "I will write to you secretly" I know nothing about.

Except for the address Antoniades Lapsikou whom I admit I know, I do not know the names of any others mentioned on the fragments of letters found in the lavatory. I may have torn up some of my letters, but I deny having torn up any of them into small fragments. As regards the letter signed Nicolas Imbriotis after long reflection I declare that I do not know the name.

I went to the lavatory several times and I tore up my own letters for this purpose.

Up to this time I had not been searched.

The principal people I know at Mytilene are . . . *here followed a list of names.* In the Piræus I know no one at all.

In Athens I know . . . *here followed another list of names.*

If we go to Athens this time we should go first to an hotel and then to 22 —— ——, the house we lived in when last in Athens.

If offered work by the British Government I should refuse it, because I wish to go in a month's time to America. I have enough money to take my three sisters and three young brothers to America.

I now state that I would accept work as an interpreter at six pounds a month.

To this examination I append a shortened version of the case for the military authorities at Kephalo whither Stavro Vassilaki was to be sent by the next trawler.

1. Telegram from V at Athens to G.H.Q. denounces whole Vassilaki family as possible suspects.
2. Object of Vassilaki family in going to Tenedos.

(a) VERSION OF VASSILAKI.

Object was to make money by setting up a restaurant or any means of commerce.

(b) COMMENT.

By April the family's resources were reduced to £180. There were ten people to keep. Despite the undoubted ability of Yanni and Stavro, only two transactions were carried out by them between April and to-day (end of July).

Further attempts to get a restaurant by their own showing appear to have been very half-hearted. In a word they acted like people who had some other source of livelihood.

3. Financial resources of Stavro Vassilaki appear illustrated by the following :

On July 25th he told Mr. Heathcote-Smith at Mytilene he would only accept work under the British Government at £20 sterling a month. Previously, Lieut. Mackenzie had been approached by Yanni Vassilaki, the other brother, to enter the British service as a secret agent ; but Yanni had subsequently failed to follow the matter up, further illustrating the security they feel about money questions.

4. The apparent necessity of the family to be in frequent communication with the outside world.

As will be noticed in Lieut. Mackenzie's memorandum, not a week elapsed without either one of the Vassilakis or an employee of theirs (as Vassili Zervaki) getting a pass to leave Tenedos. Whenever these passes were refused to one member of the clique, then another asked for a pass, and their anxiety was always immediately allayed as soon as any one of them, irrespective of whom it might be, obtained the permit that enabled them to communicate with outside.

5. Visit of Stavro Vassilaki to Mytilene to buy wood at Dip.

Considering the difficulty of obtaining permits to leave and re-enter Tenedos and the facility with which telegrams

could be sent on ordinary commercial business, this visit to the elder brother by the younger merely to "hurry him up" is remarkable.

6. Visit of sister and brother to Mytilene about June 15th.

The sister in question is the third sister, Atalanta. Mr. Heathcote-Smith questioned her at Mytilene on July 25th about this visit. She said she saw no doctor at all the first time because her brother had no money, and thus she gave her brother's evidence the lie direct.

Further, she declared, and her eldest sister Marika confirmed this statement, that Stavro had preceded her to Mytilene and that on the arrival of Atalanta Stavro returned from Athens where he had been on business.

Stavro himself, be it noted, declares that he was the whole time in the Grande Bretagne Hotel at Mytilene.

What had he been doing in Athens?

7. Acquaintances in Mytilene and Athens. Stavro and each of the three sisters separately affirmed that they had absolutely no acquaintances either in Mytilene or in Athens. The deposition of Stavro under arrest in the *Canopus* completely upsets this statement.

Also Mr. Vedova saw the family, when at Mytilene on July 26th, exchange salutes with the lawyer of the German Consulate.

8. Disposal of letters by Stavro on arrival at Mytilene.

(a) Mr. Heathcote-Smith's employee, Solon, affirms that he saw Stavro just after his arrival hurriedly emerge from a house in a small side street and that he had seen him two minutes previously enter this side street with a packet of letters in his hand. Mr. Vedova states that to his regret he left Stavro all alone for twenty minutes after he had landed. Indeed during this time Mr. Vedova was with Lieut. Mackenzie.

(b) Letters destroyed in the lavatory.

These which are forwarded as an enclosure are perhaps the most damaging proof that we hold against Stavro. His behaviour was that of a man very nervous and fearful about what was going to happen when he was first brought to the Grande Bretagne. He suddenly went to the lavatory, and Mr. Zecchini, following him there quietly, heard the continuous tearing of paper as though into small fragments. Immediately Stavro left the place Mr. Zecchini found the fragments which form this enclosure. Their subject matter is in itself damaging, as for instance the letter which states that the writer " will write secretly " owing to our censorship. The fact that Stavro owns to knowing one of the addresses and pretends not to know anything about the others or why the letter addressed to the man he does know " Antoniades Lapsikou " is written on the back of a Turkish letter appears most suspicious. It may be added that there is always a sufficiency of toilet paper in this place.

9. Object of journey to Athens.

When examined by Mr. Heathcote-Smith at the hotel on July 25th, Stavro disclaimed any idea of doing business in Athens. His conversation fluctuated between emphatic assertions that he had plenty of money and equally emphatic assertions that he did not know how he should be able to keep his sister in Athens if we did not help him with his fare. Since starting this memorandum, Stavro was called in to hear his deposition read over and added the last two lines to it, in which he states he would accept work at £6 a month. This is a further contradiction of his earlier statements about money, especially that made on July 25th, when he said he could only accept work as a secret agent provided he were paid £20 a month, because of the heavy charges on him his family represented. This last change of face on his part appears to be dictated by a nervous desire to show his readiness to serve the British.

10. Small details arousing suspicion.

Lieutenant Thompson's memorandum states that the family were brought to Tenedos from Volo. Stavro says they came from Athens.

Stavro evidently knew that Yanni had proposed himself to Lieut. Mackenzie as a secret agent, for though in his deposition Stavro pretends that he knew nothing of this, on the other hand he stated to Mr. Heathcote-Smith on July 25th at Mytilene that he considered it quite reasonable he should be detained by us at Mytilene since Yanni had not come to Lieut. Mackenzie as he had promised.

11. When the three sisters re-embarked Mr. Heathcote-Smith placed a secret agent on board to get into contact with the three sisters and follow them to Athens, where, after the arrest of Stavro, they would arrive alone and if they really were acting in any capacity for the enemy would probably reveal to Mr. Heathcote-Smith's agent the people with whom they were getting into contact. As Stavro, who had 600 francs on him when leaving Mytilene, had found an opportunity to hand this money to his sisters, Mr. Heathcote-Smith telegraphed to the S.N.O. Mudros asking that this money should be taken from the sisters and returned to him for Stavro, so that the sisters arriving stranded in Athens would be more likely to give themselves away by getting into immediate touch with their German or Turkish employers.

It is submitted that the house of the Vassilakis in Tenedos should be suddenly and really ruthlessly searched and that Yanni Vassilaki should be arrested and examined. It is further submitted that no communication should be allowed between those members of the family on Tenedos and those elsewhere.

The search, to prove effective, would have to be much more thorough than those usually carried out. It should be noted that in the arrest of Stavro on the *Macedonia* opportunity was given to him to hand over to his sisters

the 600 francs. He could with equal ease have disposed of incriminating documents.

It should also be noted that Mr. Wilfred Vedova, who was supposed to be utilised for secret service work on Tenedos on Mr. Heathcote-Smith's recommendation, was never told, so he declares, by Lieutenant Thompson that he was to shadow the Vassilaki party which left Tenedos on July 24th, and it was largely owing to this that a closer watch was not kept on the people on their arrival.

I have given the Vassilaki case at this length, because it is typical of hundreds of cases that came the way of Intelligence officers during the war, and because it illustrates the difficulties with which they were faced. The curtain now falls on the second act as Stavro Vassilaki departs under arrest in the trawler for Kephalo and the three mournful sisters return from Lemnos to Mytilene.

Heathcote-Smith after the excitement of the case was filled with missionary zeal over my plaguy leg and suggested as an excellent way to complete the cure a drive in a motor-car to the other side of the island on some matter connected with smuggling. All I can remember of the investigation is an endless drive in an antique car over a dusty road full of holes, throughout which Heathcote-Smith was trying to relate a synopsis of the intricate plot of a French novel he had recently read. In the most comfortable circumstances and surroundings I find the narration by an enthusiastic reader of the plot of a novel or a play one of the major penances of this mortal life. What I found it, trying to keep my leg clear of the hard seat of that car on that dusty road which bumped and twisted along through endless groves of olives, may be imagined.

I hear Heathcote-Smith's smooth voice now, though I am probably not reporting his exposition quite correctly.

"And then Alphonse discovers that his wife had left the

pearls in a railway-carriage . . . or, no, wait a minute, I forgot to tell you that Eugène, the brother of Alphonse, had some time ago had a love affair with the . . . now wait a minute, I'm wrong, that was after . . ." but all plots sound the same when they are related by an enthusiastic reader. In this case it was the punctuation of the narrative by an exacerbated sciatic nerve which distinguished it from others in my memory, though the details of what happened at the end of that long drive have faded from my mind.

Meanwhile, E. C. Hole* had arrived from Athens to take up the post of acting Vice-Consul at Mytilene, much to the relief of Heathcote-Smith, for whom the strain of Intelligence work was quite enough without having the petty worries of consular routine as well. It must be remembered that practically all the effective espionage on Turkey was now dependent on his efforts. Much good work had been done from Athens earlier; but it was growing daily more difficult for an agent to get from there into Turkey and out again, and it looked as if it would soon be impossible except at lucky intervals. Consequently, with our sources of information depending to this extent on Heathcote-Smith's organization, the nervous anxiety of landing messengers or agents followed by the even more acute nervous anxiety of getting them off again, was sometimes overwhelming. The man in charge of the active side of Intelligence is likely to have plenty of what is called imagination, and the responsibility of men's lives always lies as heavily upon his conscience as it does on that of an officer in the field. Money for the work was in these earlier days of the war hard to come by. Not that the men who risked their lives to spy upon the Turks were so much tempted by money. They were nearly all of them patriots who believed that they were serving the cause of a greater Hellas by their activities. But the most patriotic Greek is not indifferent to a proper re-

* H.B.M.'s Consul at Damascus.

ward for his services, and the rewards we were able to offer were always inadequate to the risk that was run, whatever the quality of the information supplied ; while for some of the information they were ludicrous in their meanness. However, I shall not prolong this volume with details of espionage, for there will be more suitable opportunities to discuss the whole question later on.

Hole was a quiet and humorous bird—I use the colloquialism because it exactly suits him—and he took refuge in a kind of pawkiness from a decided inclination on Heathcote-Smith's part to treat him as very much the junior subaltern. The boat on which he had travelled from the Piræus had been stopped by one of our ships, and for some reason or other probably connected with the bashfulness of the Navy, Hole had been called upon to search a female Serbian refugee of according to him an indescribable hideousness and squalor. I forget the details of that high seas drama ; but I remember we found it diverting at the time, which is a comment on the change of values that war effects. It seems strange now to remember that we once thought the miseries of this wretched creature something to laugh at. Yet pondering that last remark I ask myself whether the priggishness of the present masquerading as compassion gets any nearer to objective truth than the brutality of the past disguised as duty.

It was high time Hole had arrived to take over Heathcote-Smith's consular work, for Vedova had by this time put the clerical staff of the Vice-Consulate in a phrenzy. His failure to obtain permission to enter any house in Mytilene he chose and search it at the pistol's point for Vassilaki's missing correspondence was attributed by him to a plot of the consulate staff to belittle his position and smirch his patriotism. I never did find out what either his technical or his actual nationality was. There used once upon a time to be a divergence between the two in the Levant

where a man usually for trading purposes would become a national of whatever country's consul was most likely to help him. This mixture of nationalities for commercial ends is well illustrated by the Müller memorandum.

I have a note of a letter written by one of the Greek clerks of the Vice-Consulate to Heathcote-Smith, which indicates the kind of catfish Vedova was proving in Mytilene.

*Sir:*

*Mr. Wilfred Vedova called to the British Vice-Consulate yesterday, and before a great number of good people begun swearing the Greek Nation and blaspheming the Greeks of their origin.*

*This not being a proper manner of a civilized man I shall be glad if you will kindly give a good lesson to him as he is almost deprived of education.*

Heathcote-Smith lectured the offender, and I lectured him. I do not remember what excuse he made to Heathcote-Smith, but to me he said:

"Captain Mackenzie, I love and estimate you as though you were being my brother, and if you tell me that I must not say to these dirty vagabonds and stinking double-faces what are my thoughts for them, why, then I must obey. Thank God, I know from my service with the glorious British Navy what obedience can mean. I only ask to serve Great Britain while I am alive and able for service, which cannot be long, because I have a bad kidney and must be in hospital before many weeks. I only ask you to put your hand here."

With this he seized my hand and held it to his back.

"You can feel my kidney jumping about, I think?" he inquired.

I told him I could not feel anything jumping about, which seemed to mortify him. However, on feeling the small of his back with his own hand he declared that the

kidney was pulsating like a mad thing, and that when it behaved in such a way it was a sure sign he was suffering from acute mental distress.

"And that is because I have allowed myself to forget in my excitements that you have always treated me as a gentleman, and it is because I have for you an undying love that to-night I shall mesmerize a woman who will tell us where we may find a submarine, though for me to make mesmerizations when I am sick is terrible."

So, that night Vedova took me to a house in an outlying part of the town, and I sat under a vine-wreathed trellis in a blaze of moonlight while he gyrated round a doughy woman of most unsibylline aspect.

"I have no force to-night," he declared at last, sinking down exhausted upon a chair and calling for retzinato wine, which, though to the prejudiced tasting like a mixture of claret and eucalyptus, bears to the lover of Greece every-time he drinks it an increasing resemblance to his conception of nectar. The doughy woman was better suited by the rôle of Hebe than the Sibyl, and it was in no trance that she filled our glasses with the wine and set before us plates of almonds.

"It was coming over me," said Vedova sadly, "when my kidney made such a bumping that I could not put her to sleep. It is a terrible pity, for she would have surely told us where we may take a submarine."

However, if Vedova failed to produce a submarine, he produced on the following evening something that was much more welcome. I was walking round the band-stand in the gardens after dinner, and that meant half-past ten or eleven when Lesbos was parched by the Dogstar, walking round and telling myself I was a fool to stay out in the nocturnal damp, but as much unable to forgo that dreamy circumambulation as a goldfish in a bowl. Suddenly, from one of the by-paths which radiated from the central illumina-

tion into pine-soft and pine-scented darkness, I heard my name uttered in the hoarse whisper of melodrama, and looking round I saw Vedova signalling to me with his moustaches behind a bush. I drew near, and he told me that somebody wished to speak to me. By the mystery in his voice it might have been the Vali of Smyrna himself whom on a magic carpet he had transported from the mainland to Mytilene.

"Can I bring this person to speak to you?" he breathed heavily into my ear.

"But who is it?"

"I think it will be better for me to bring him to you."

"Very well, go and bring him."

"I have your orders, Captain?" he asked with portentous solemnity.

"Yes, yes, yes."

Vedova salaamed like an obliging genie, and pranced away into the blackness beyond the music. The moon nearly a week past the full had not yet risen. A minute or two later he beckoned to me from the corner of the path and produced Aubrey Herbert, who came peering up to me. I need hardly add that Vedova took all the credit of this delightful surprise.

"Excuse me, Captain," he said complacently, "I think you will not want me now. I have very important business in the boat from Tenedos."

"Go along then."

"Captain," he hissed in my ear, "they have tried to bribe me for let two hundred bags of raisins come through. Captain Mackenzie, the whole boat is stinking of raisins."

"I don't wonder."

"Captain Mackenzie, they shall not land these damn raisins! If I sit all night for guarding them, do not be afraid. There will not come one raisin ashore when I have my pistol to say 'No.' I am completely furious that they

think I am a dirty blackguard who can be bribed to give licence to make what they like with raisins. I am not such a man, Captain Mackenzie."

I was really too much charmed by the prospect of Aubrey Herbert's company for a few days to pay attention to Vedova's denunciation of the raisins, and so I suppose I must bear a portion of the blame for the panic he created that night on the unlucky steamer. Anyway, next morning he was still standing on guard over the bags of raisins with a pistol in either hand, while the officers and crew were still arguing with him, so far that is as it is possible to argue with a man who counters every logical hit of his opponents by ordering them to put their hands above their heads. I forget the sequel. No doubt the affair of the raisins was one of the first major operations of consular diplomacy which Hole in his new post was called upon to conduct.

Aubrey Herbert was on sick leave, which he had only accepted in the Islands to avoid being sent to Egypt. He had left Anzac last Sunday, had spent a few days in Tenedos, and was to stay here till the trawler should leave on the fourth of August for Imbros, so that we were likely to go back together. He was wearing a uniform of faded canary yellow. I had never seen that shade of khaki before and commented on the attractive novelty.

"It was made from some stuff my wife got," he told me vaguely, though whether for casement curtains or uniform he did not add. There were only three buttons left on the tunic, two being the proper brass buttons of his regiment, the Welsh Guards, the other like one of the brown crinkly variety of the sweets known as burnt almonds. One shoulder strap had the three stars of his rank as captain, but the other one bore only the single star of a second-lieutenant. He had no belt, and instead of wearing boots or shoes he shuffled along in a pair of red Turkish slippers.

His sun helmet had received a heavy dent somewhere which gave it rather the look of a dissolute and bloated Homburg hat, and as a final contribution to the unusual in his military equipment he was not wearing a tie.

"Is that your luggage?" I asked, eyeing the small battered case he was carrying.

"No, no, that's somewhere. I think my man Christo is looking after it probably. This is only a typewriter."

He had taken a room at the other hotel; but he moved up to the Grande Bretagne the next day.

"Oh, and by the way," he said to me, "I think I rather want a tie."

So in the morning I took him to the leading hosier of Mytilene, who had a selection of the most gaudy cravats imaginable, for they were such cravats as had defeated even the sartorial courage of Mytileniote youth.

"These look rather bright for uniform, don't they?" suggested Aubrey, putting his eyes to within six inches of the glass-encased exhibition.

"Yes, I think they are a little bright."

"Ah, but here's the fellow I want," he said, pointing to one whose ground was certainly khaki, though the fact that it was sown with vivid purple lozenges rather detracted from its appropriateness to a military uniform.

"But that's covered with purple lozenges," I protested.

"Is it?" He leant over the counter and made what seemed a microscopic examination of a rock-pool. "Oh, I think it's all right. I really must have a tie. Posos?" he inquired of the salesman, who replied in English, rubbing his hands:

"Fourdrachmasthankyouverymuch!"

"You realize, Aubrey, don't you, that the tie you have chosen is covered with purple lozenges?"

"Yes, my dear, but they're hardly noticeable."

How remote now seemed my embarrassment in Alexan-

dria over uniform just over two months ago, how utterly remote!

Aubrey Herbert had heard so much about the Vassilaki family in Tenedos that we felt he was the one to deal with the emotional crisis of the three sisters who were back in Mytilene after being held up in Mudros. When I broke the news to him, he was sitting out in the first-floor corridor of the Grande Bretagne, his eyes close to the folio he was covering with his sprawling hand, or was he using the typewriter?

"Do you think you can take on the Miss Vassilakis for a bit, and try to calm them down? They simply will not stop crying."

"Well, just let me read you first what I've written to Bob Cecil* about the situation out here."

And I can see him now, his eyes scarcely a couple of inches from the paper, reading out to me a letter full of passionate pleading for the Turks. We never argued the Turkish question. Neither of us was likely to convert the other. It was sad for me that so many of the people I loved best out there—Aubrey Herbert, Wyndham Deedes, George Lloyd, to name only three—were utterly pro-Turkish whereas I would have put every Turk in Europe to the sword, and would now had I the chance. I listened while Aubrey Herbert read me his letter to another great idealist, then Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

"You don't agree with that?" he asked, when he had finished.

"No, I'm afraid I don't."

He sighed.

"Well, what do you want me to do with the Miss Vassilakis?"

"I think you're the only person who can reassure them."

"They're very beautiful, aren't they?"

*Viscount Cecil of Chelwood.

"Yes, but they don't look their best just now after crying incessantly for about a week."

"Poor creatures! Well, I'll see what I can do to help them."

So Vedova brought them up, and for an hour they wept forth their woes to a Bayard, whose courtesy never flagged.

"But why can't we go home?" they moaned.

"It's the Admiral," Aubrey Herbert announced finally. "We can't do anything with him. He's a most severe man."

One of the three sisters declared he was evidently not a man but a butcher, and we did not contradict her. We must have made that so amiable Admiral de Robeck appear a kind of Moloch in his indifference to human misery. Vedova led the three weeping women away for a while, and the squire of dames turned reproachfully to me.

"I thought you said they were beautiful?"

"Did I give you that impression? I believe I did tell you that Atalanta wasn't bad-looking. But you must have got the idea that all three were beautiful from Thompson in Tenedos. He gave me the same impression."

"I think they're hideous," Aubrey Herbert groaned.

"Well, you didn't see them at their best. They've evidently not stopped crying ever since their brother was arrested. Their eyes were their best feature, and of course they've spoilt them completely."

Later on that night Vedova brought the weeping sisters back to the Grande Bretagne. We asked him why he had done so and he told us that since their interview with Captain Herbert they had talked of nothing but his chivalry and would not be consoled until they saw him again. Aubrey was as kind and gentle as ever with them; but even he had had enough of them by midnight and insisted that Vedova should without delay escort them back to their hotel. They said they could not feel secure against further outrages by the Admiral (we had successfully landed him with

the entire burden of responsibility) unless they were allowed to stay in the same hotel as Monsieur Herbert. He told them that there was no room vacant and even fetched up the proprietor to confirm our statement. It was no use, they would not budge.

"But really, my dear ladies, you cannot stay here," Aubrey Herbert protested.

At this one of them (I think it was Calliope) went off into hysterics. She sat back in her chair, laughing and screaming and sobbing and drumming her heels on the floor. This scene was taking place in the big corridor, for neither Aubrey nor I would allow them into our rooms. I took Vedova downstairs and asked him if he could not mesmerize them into tranquillity.

"Captain Mackenzie, give me time and I shall mesmerize for you any woman. I have mesmerized once a woman in Smyrna and she has come to our front-door and taken off all her clothes until she was naked like a savage. She has run about the street mad with wanting me until my wife has said she cannot be scandalized like this. But I cannot mesmerize three womens all together, and if I make to take one away all three are screaming like hell."

I do not remember what time it was when we got them out of the hotel and the sound of their sobbing died away along the street.

"I wish I was already away to the mainland in the *Omala* with Hadkinson," Aubrey sighed.

We had lunched with Hadkinson in the narrow little quayside restaurant. The apple-cheeked pirate's joy at seeing his friend again was tremendous. They had last met in Aubrey Herbert's house in Somerset, where the outbreak of war had interrupted Hadkinson's visit.

"My god, it's a strange ting, Aubrey, dat you have come to Mytilene. I have felt it in my bones dat you were coming for some days now, and I have told them to kill a

lamb, which we shall eat on our island. Mackenzie, you are coming too, eh ? "

" I wish I could, but I must wait here in case Sir Ian arrives."

" I have a machine-gun now in the *Omala*," Hadkinson went on pensively. " By god, I tink we will go to Thasos and give those damned Greek officials there something. They have arrested two of our agents. They badly want a good lesson."

Thasos was an island that I was several times going to visit on a desperate adventure ; but somehow an obstacle always presented itself, and when I left these waters in September, 1917, it was still unvisited. The pinewoods and babbling streams of Thasos have always haunted my mind since, and, if the island be as fair and green as I fancy it, I have missed a classic strand.

However, Hadkinson did not take Aubrey Herbert to Thasos, which would indeed have been too much of an Odyssey even for the *Omala ;* but he took him the next night to the island of Moskonisi, whence news had reached us of a woman who had volunteered to be put ashore near Aivalik and bring us back information.

On that Sunday, being the first of August, Aubrey Herbert, Heathcote-Smith, and I lunched with the Aristarchis. Aristarchi Bey was in a terrific state of excitement on account of the arrival of the *Andania*, the *Alaudia*, and two other transports in Port Iero with a brigade and a half of the Tenth (Irish) Division of Kitchener's Army. Officers had been seen walking about Mytilene, and everybody was asking indignantly what kept King Constantine from marching beside the British and the French.

" Captain Herbert, I tell you I would sooner die than live to see the Germans win this war," he declared.

We ate with relish one of those huge and delicious Aristarchi lunches. Aubrey was severe on the stupidity of

attempting a landing on the Asia Minor coast from here. Heathcote-Smith, too, thought that the project was ridiculous without more careful preparation. After lunch Aristarchi Bey took me into his library, locked the door, and begged me almost with tears to dissuade them from letting the troops encamp round Port Iero where the malaria was virulent, especially at this season of the year.

"I don't want to pry into secrets," he barked. "But unless they are going to land at once, it is absolute madness to stay round Port Iero. Why wouldn't the authorities accept the camping-ground we found for them?"

"Well, as a matter of fact," I told him, "Sir Ian Hamilton is coming here himself soon, and then everything will be decided."

That evening a telegram arrived from G.H.Q. to tell Heathcote-Smith that Sir Ian would arrive at Port Iero to-morrow morning and that he and I were to meet him.

"No Moskonisi for you, Heathcote," I said.

"Ha-ha twice!" Aubrey chuckled. "I shan't be here."

"With the herbs I have made them bring, dat lamb is going to be splendid, Aubrey," Hadkinson declared. "I tell you it is going to be someting you will always remember."

"I've just heard," said Heathcote-Smith, looking remote, but with a note in his voice that was meant for me, "I've just heard that a German submarine was sitting outside the entrance to Port Iero waiting for the transports and nearly got both the *Andania* and the *Alaudia*. That shows the Germans knew they were coming."

"I wonder if they really did," I murmured.

"The Nomarch is back," said Heathcote-Smith pointedly.

I never obtained absolute confirmation of that German submarine's attempt on the transports; but I should like to think that it was there in consequence of information received, for if it was it would mean that my attempt to lure any submarines southward was successful.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE NEW ARMY

*H.M.S. CHATHAM* with Sir Ian Hamilton on board arrived in Port Iero about half-past five on the morning of the second of August. George Lloyd accompanied him, and also George Brodrick as A.D.C., while to lend a touch of added significance to his visit Admiral de Robeck came too. Luckily the Vassilaki sisters did not hear of the Admiral's presence. If they had had a suspicion that this despot of sea and land was within reach of their lamentations, all three would certainly have flung themselves at his feet and inundated the quarter-deck with tears in an attempt to secure the restoration of their brother Stavro to liberty.

In the transport *Andania* were the Fifth Royal Irish Fusiliers and the Sixth Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers; in the *Alaudia* were the Sixth and Seventh Royal Dublin Fusiliers. These four battalions composed the Thirty-first Brigade of the Tenth Division under the command of Brigadier-General F. F. Hill. In addition to them there were the Sixth Royal Irish Fusiliers in *H.M.T. Canada* and the Fifth Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers in *H.M.T. Novian*. These made up half of Nicol's Thirtieth Brigade, the other two battalions of which, the Sixth and Seventh Royal Munster Fusiliers, were at Mudros with Sir Bryan Mahon and his Divisional Staff.

The Commander-in-Chief spent the morning in inspecting these six battalions. It was a pity that the rest of the

Thirtieth Brigade with the General commanding the Division could not have been sent to Mytilene instead of to Mudros. One may speculate that some of the heart-rending confusion later might have been avoided if Sir Bryan Mahon could have been in closer touch at any rate with two of the Brigades of his Division. Cooper's Twenty-ninth Brigade, consisting of the Sixth Royal Irish Rifles, Fifth Connaught Rangers, Sixth Leinsters, and Tenth Hampshires had already been landed at Anzac.

My memory of the details of that morning is clouded. I seem to recollect that about noon we crossed the bay in a motor-launch and met two of the battalions returning from a route march ; but the first definite incident and conversation I recall is of walking with George Brodrick along a steep wooded bank overhanging the water and of Brodrick's saying to me in a voice heavy with gloom :

" Well, what do you think of them ? "

" They seem all right."

" Do you think so ? I think they look a very weedy lot."

" That's only because they haven't had time to get sunburnt. You must remember that you're used to the sight of men who have been out here for some time."

" Well, I hope you're right," said George Brodrick pessimistically. " But I can't say I feel more cheerful about this new landing, now that I've seen some of the troops who are going to be engaged in it."

If Sir Ian himself felt any doubts about the fitness of these troops for the task in front of them, there was no sign of it in his manner. He was outwardly his courteous, confident, cheerful, intrepid self, and though looking back on that grilling August day from the present I am tempted to wonder if there may not have been a deliberate accentuation of his optimism and enthusiasm, as if he were trying in the style of Coué to defeat the nervous strain of the last few months, that is inevitable now that I can turn over the

pages of the chronicle and read what happened at the end of that week; for never again can I or any writer who lived through those days before Suvla recapture the mental attitude of faith in the success of our enterprise. Not that I can claim ever to have possessed it. Down in my heart I was always positive that the Suvla landing would fail. I lacked faith in it from the start, not let me hastily add, because I had weighed the logic of our position, but merely because I had an intuition that we should fail. I tried to convince myself intellectually, and I think I succeeded in doing so; but emotionally I remained a sceptic.

We probably lunched with Captain Grant in the *Canopus*, but if we did the memory of it has completely faded. Nor can I recollect how George Lloyd spent most of his time. I cannot recall his taking any part at the inspection, and my most vivid memory of him that day is of the disgusted expression on his face when I offered him a vanilla ice at tea. We talked about Aubrey Herbert, however, and to my remark that I did not see how Aubrey could avoid being killed or badly wounded much longer I recall his reply:

"Oh, well, I think most of us feel that there is a special little cherub up aloft who looks after dear Aubrey."

"Perhaps there is, and if there is he has kept him over on the coast of Asia Minor to-day."

I was thinking of the cold way in which Sir Ian had replied, 'Is he?' when I had informed him that Aubrey Herbert was in Mytilene. It is difficult to believe that Aubrey ever irritated anybody; but I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that he irritated Sir Ian extremely. Discussions on the beautiful nature of the Turk are obviously likely to irritate a man who is hoping to take Constantinople.

That hot afternoon (and how hot it was!) Heathcote-Smith was waiting by the landing-stage with the car that was to drive Sir Ian into Mytilene, where he wished to call

on both the Military Commandant and the Civil Governor.

The view from the crown of the hill above Port Iero was of exceptional loveliness that afternoon. We left the car and stood beside it for a minute or two to gaze at the flickering play of sunlight on the roofs and walls of the city, which gleamed in the azurine sea-haze like the star in the heart of a pale cabochon sapphire. Heathcote-Smith seized the opportunity to push his scheme for landing ten thousand irregulars at Aivalik, but what reception his arguments had from Sir Ian I cannot remember. Indeed, I only remember that I grew more and more utterly tired, more and more sticky with heat. The climb up to the castle was a weary grind, and the conversation first between Sir Ian and the Cretan Colonel who commanded the troops and then between him and the Nomarch made no impression on me except of futility. I do not know what Monsieur Venizelos had said to the porous, pasty-faced little man, but he was in a state of servile obsequiousness, and Sir Ian in his desire to be friendly and courteous adopted with him the manner of a sixth-form prefect in the Eleven condescending to a grubby little junior boy who had been recommended to his notice.

It was late in the afternoon when we reached the Grande Bretagne where Heathcote-Smith and I had ordered the best tea we could procure. The ices, so despicable to George Lloyd, were a success with the others. Heathcote-Smith fluttered round Sir Ian like a dark silky moth: Sir Ian walked into his ice appreciatively. George Lloyd pulled my leg about the Greeks, and George Brodrick found an opportunity to murmur that Mr. Winston Churchill had been on his way out to Imbros, but that at Brindisi he had been dissuaded from going on. I wonder what influence he would have had in shaping events after Suvla had he come. What rubbish one writes! As if Destiny ever contemplated any alternative!

It was nearly seven o'clock when our guests left us to drive back to Port Iero and go on board the *Chatham*, which would be in Kephalo early next morning.

In that same light cruiser eleven weeks later Sir Ian Hamilton was to leave Kephalo for ever. It was on her quarter-deck that he took his last salute as Commander-in-Chief from the warships in the roadstead. Even for a mere junior officer it is a moving experience to stand on a quarter-deck and be carried past manned ships saluting at anchor. The emotion of it for that Commander-in-Chief whose career fortune not folly was darkening on that drear October afternoon must have been of a poignancy almost intolerable.

*I wondered whether I could stand the strain of seeing Imbros, Kephalos, the camp, fade into the region of dreams—and I was hesitating when a message came from the Captain to say the Admiral begged me to run up on to the quarter-deck. So I ran, and found the* Chatham *steering a corkscrew course—threading in and out amongst the warships at anchor. Each as we passed manned ship and sent us on our way with the cheers of brave men ringing in our ears.*

With these words Sir Ian Hamilton's *Gallipoli Diary* comes to an end.

Aubrey Herbert came back after dinner. He was full of air and sun and sea, and I envied him his twenty-four hours of adventure by the Asiatic shore. As he and I were to dine on board the *Andania* with General Hill to-morrow and after sleeping in the *Canopus* leave very early in the morning in Strange's trawler for Tenedos and Imbros, I decided to go to bed early, for I was feeling completely exhausted by my day, and there were signs of a return of neuritis. I had hardly reached my room when Vedova came prancing in, much excited, to say that a party of bluejackets had started to break up the town, that the police had all been called

out, that the rioters had been arrested, and that they were all now in the police-station.

"Then they'd better stay there," I told him irritably.

"No, but please to excuse me, Captain Mackenzie, you must come and give orders that they can be sent back to Port Iero, because I have a waggon which can take them. And I think if you will come to the police-station they will do how you say."

I felt less confident; but I supposed it was my duty to wrestle with these tiresome fellows, so I accompanied Vedova to the police-station. The party of bluejackets turned out to be three R.N.V.R. seamen with scrawny moustaches, as unpleasantly drunken and mutinous a trio as ever I hope to meet.

"Look here," I told them, "if you don't stop using that filthy language, you'll get no help from me to pull you out of this mess."

"We don't want no bloody help from you, guv'nor," one of them hiccoughed. "We'd sooner help our bloody selves. We've been got out here on false pretences. We've been treated like dogs by His Majesty's bloody Navy and we're just about sick of it."

"'Ear! 'Ear!" belched his companions.

"Fed up, d'year what I'm telling you, guv'nor. We ain't been paid what we oughter be paid. And the country oughter know how we get served by the bleedin' Navy."

"Well, that's enough of it," I said sharply. "You won't listen to reason, so I can do nothing for you. You'll be taken back to your ship to-morrow under arrest by the local police, and I hope your Captain will be glad to see you."

"Now, don't you bully us!" the biggest of them growled, lurching toward me with his fist above his shoulders.

"Look here, my man, I advise you to keep a distance, or

you'll find yourself in trouble. There's a war going on, you know, and it's not a good idea to strike a superior officer on active service."

"Who's my superior bloody officer?" he demanded indignantly. "I don't reckonize nobody as my superior officer. My Union knows who I am, and I don't want no muckin' mouth-wash from the likes of you."

They were too drunk for argument, and yet it was only by persuasion that I was likely to get them quietly on to the waggon and out of the town. So, for half an hour I sat there trying to reason with the swine, so successfully, indeed, that by the time I had induced them to believe that my plan for their transport was the best one they had become too friendly, and my next difficulty was to convince them I did not want to spend the rest of the night shaking hands with them. However, I escaped from their cordiality at last, and after thanking the chief of the local police for the tactful way in which he had managed to make the best of what might have been an occasion for ill will I left Vedova to stow them away in the waggon.

The next morning a telegram came from G.H.Q. to say that Stavro Vassilaki had escaped and telling me to warn the Senior Naval Officer at Port Iero. Hard on the heels of this sensational despatch the three sisters of the missing prisoner arrived to say that they had heard Captain Herbert was going to Tenedos and to implore him, who was the only man they had met in uniform with any claim to honour or decency, to let them accompany him.

"I really cannot take you, my dear ladies," said Aubrey. "The Admiral would be absolutely furious."

I thought of the Admiral's kindly and florid countenance as I had seen it yesterday; but there was nothing else for it, we had to give him the reputation of a bloodthirsty and irrational tyrant. And we did.

"*Mais il est terrible, cet homme*," the eldest sister gasped

after I had tried to convey the appalling punishment which he might visit upon Aubrey Herbert, should he of his chivalry and gentleness be persuaded to surrender to the sisters' prayers.

"*Vous avez raison, mademoiselle. Il est un Caligule,*" I assured her.

"*Un quoi?*" she cried in justifiable bewilderment.

"*Un Néro . . . un tyran acharné . . . enfin il est un vrai Turque, eh, voilà!*"

The sisters stared at one another. I think they were fancying themselves being tossed about the Ægean presently in the harem of a Flying Dutchman.

"They are much safer where they are, aren't they, Aubrey?"

"Much safer," he agreed fervidly.

"But our poor brother," they moaned. "What will the Admiral do to him?"

It was clear that their brother had not succeeded in communicating with them since his escape.

"If your brother asks your advice what he shall do," I told them, "persuade him that the best chance he has will be to tell the exact truth."

Perhaps the prospect of persuading Stavro to do this dismayed their courage. Anyway, all three of them burst into fresh tears, and half an hour of crisis upon crisis of hysterical lamentation went by before Vedova was able to get them out of the hotel.

When I looked from my window to watch Vedova in his dingy white naval interpreter's uniform shepherding those three woebegone females in black down the sunny street, it was the last time I was to see him upon an active errand. In October when I was in Athens he paid me a visit, still in that dingy white uniform, and I told him a little crossly that he had no business to be wearing it about the streets of a neutral capital.

"Captain Mackenzie," he announced, "I must now go into some hospital to have a bad operation for my kidneys."

After this I lost sight of him, and as I write these words I do not even know whether he be still alive. I was to meet many figures as eccentric and several as comic as Wilfred Vedova before my experience of life in war time came to an end, but he had one quality which distinguished him from many of the others : he was brave.

"They may sneer at Vedova," Heathcote-Smith used to say, "but, though he's maddening sometimes and gets one into all sorts of trouble by his idiotic behaviour, he is loyal to those he likes and he *is* brave. I don't believe it's possible to frighten him. Thompson doesn't know how to get the best out of him. If they don't want him in Tenedos, I can use him here."

It frets me that I do not know what ultimately happened to Vedova. I believe that he was a genuinely sick man, and yet it would have been impossible not to laugh at that kidney of his. Perhaps it was as well that he did not work under me in Athens. As it was, I had enough indiscretions by subordinates to cover up to the best of my ability. Yet I still regret the two or three more fantastic chapters he might have added to my memoirs, though I have an uneasy notion that characters like him are, like those absurd characters one meets in dreams, exquisitely diverting to the dreamer, but incommunicable to others. Even in the case of the most successfu comic figures I have drawn I am always left with a desire to say to my reader, 'Ah, yes, but if only you could have seen him or heard him or known him as I did.' The trouble with comic creations is that the reader so seldom helps their reality by imparting to them some of his own life. Draw a romantic young man or a romantic young woman, and you may be sure that, however much you may regret the failure of your pen, you will.

always have a few readers who will identify themselves with your creations or inventions or portraits. The real difference between the flat and the round portrait, of which a good deal of nonsense has been written lately by literary critics who have read much but lived hardly at all, is that what is called the flat portrait must exist without the help of the reader, whereas the round portrait absorbs from him a certain amount of life. Nobody will feel inclined to perceive a breath of himself in that figure of an emaciated Chinese conjurer who has flickered with grotesque gestures across the sheet of a shadow-show.

And in that last comparison I draw nearer to the essential Vedova. One evening he and I were watching one of those immemorial entertainments which possessed such a much profounder reality than any of the cinematographs which by now must almost everywhere have superseded them. The theatre was a booth hung with blood-red draperies. The audience was the audience of the old penny gaff. The drama revolved round the misdoings of a malignant and a turbaned Turk with snaky moustaches and a tremendous scimitar. The lovers of course were Greek. The thrill of the unsophisticated audience who were seated on those rough benches, not to cuddle and to hold hands, but to see the play, gave a tenseness to the atmosphere in which during the most exciting moments even the click-click of the big amber beads would stop and an emotional silence would prevail. Any discomfiture of the Terrible Turk was always effected with bizarre humiliations that made the audience shriek with laughter. Vedova and I were seated in the front row, and once when I turned round to make some remark to him, the light from the sheet was flickering over his sallow face and glimmering in his pale protruding globular eyes. As I gazed at him I could fancy that he was one of those grotesque shadows waiting to play his part in the drama and that he would presently go prancing across

the sheet to the accompaniment of apprehensive gasps from the audience, which would turn to shrill laughter when the turbaned head of him who had struck off the heads of so many noble Greeks was kicked round the stage at last like the shadow of an ignominious melon. Vedova was a genuine inhabitant of that fantastic world behind the sheet; and I look back at him now as I might look back at the antics of a marionette I had clapped in childhood.

In the late afternoon Aubrey Herbert and I drove over to Port Iero. Hadkinson had taken charge of Darwin who was to spend the day in a Turkish bath and sleep on board the *Omala*, joining the trawler at daybreak. I remember having a great tussle to climb up the side of the *Canopus* with my kit-bag. I do not know what is the technical name for those inadequate ridges for ascending the side of a battleship; but I have never felt so much like Sisyphus as I did on that blazing afternoon until a kindly bluejacket leant over and relieved me of the kit-bag, after which with both hands available for clawing I reached the deck.

The dinner that night in the *Andania* is something to which the survivors of that gallant Thirty-first Brigade may look back as to the ball in Brussels on the eve of Waterloo. I still have the menu card. Here it is without accents as printed:

CUNARD LINE.
Brig.-Gen. F. F. Hill, C.B., D.S.O.
and Party.
H.M.T. "Andania," Mitylene.
August 3rd, 1915.

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MENU.
Melon Glace

Creme de Tomate

—

Red Mullet—Mitylene

—

Supreme de Volaille—Jeannette

—

Cotelettes de Mouton a l'Anglaise

—

Petits Pois
Pommes Croquette

—

Compote of Victoria Plums

—

Dessert Cafe

———

Many of those who sat down to eat that dinner were attending the last formal occasion of their lives. This was Tuesday evening: on Friday night Hill's Brigade was northward bound for Suvla in the darkness, having been transhipped from their transports into ten small steamers and trawlers. They arrived in the fatal bay an hour before the dawn of Saturday: by nightfall those who survived to sleep on Chocolate Hill had lived through the longest day since they were born.

The guest of honour at dinner was the Nomarch, who sat on General Hill's right, wriggling and smirking as obsequiously as though an embarrassed waiter had been included among the guests by mistake. Every officer present believed that the Brigade was going to land somewhere in Asia Minor. I would not be sure that even General Hill himself knew the real objective. The group of officers seated near me were anxious not to ask awkward questions; at the same time they hungered for information.

"Of course, I don't want to put you in a difficult position,

but if you could give us a hint of the kind of country before us, that would be something," one of them opened.

"Well, honestly, I do not know. I do know more or less where you are going to land; but the country itself is as strange to me as it will be to you."

"Is this show to be anything like the landing in April?"

This question came sharply from a young subaltern opposite.

"I should say there was no chance at all of its being anything like that."

The mention of the original landing set everybody off, and a number of questions followed, among which I remember one asked of me in a low voice by my immediate neighbour, a captain of mature age:

"Tell me; what *is* the effect of machine-gun fire? I mean to say, are you aware of each bullet or does it seem more like a hose? How many bullets for instance do you reckon come in a minute?"

I said I had been lucky enough to remain ignorant of the effect of machine-gun fire at close quarters, but that shrapnel—and then I hesitated, for I was aware that the officers all around were waiting for my reply. I decided that whether they thought me a braggart or not the effect of shrapnel had somehow got to be minimized. And by the time I had finished with shrapnel it sounded as refreshing as a spray of bay-rum in a hairdresser's shop on a hot August afternoon.

Presently those round me returned to the details of the landing in April.

"You all seem to have been reading those despatches of Sir Ian Hamilton's very carefully."

"Well, my god," somebody exclaimed, "we've had nothing else to read on the voyage out."

Incredible though it must sound, the pudding-brained

censorship at home had held up Sir Ian Hamilton's despatch about the April landing until the very day* these new troops were sailing, so that for the whole of that voyage from England they had been brooding over the story of it. It was literally the last news they had read in an English paper.

When it is proposed to abolish the death penalty for cowardice in the field those in favour of its retention always argue that the ultimate penalty must be paid by the individual for the sake of the many. If that argument is to be considered valid, then stupidity must be punished with equal rigour. The oaf that chose such a moment to publish Sir Ian's despatch of the April landing was probably never even told by anybody that he was an oaf. He probably never knew that he had done his wretched bit to help the hostile gods who were fighting against the success of the Suvla landing.

"So you've no idea what kind of country we shall be in?" the elderly Captain repeated.

"Well, wherever you land," I told him, "you may expect rough and difficult country."

"Shall we have any guides?"

I thought of the men for Cheshme sent down to me from Helles by Deedes. They were hanging about Mytilene now, being paid at the rate of a pound a week until their services should be required in Asia Minor. I saw no reason to add to my neighbour's preliminary anxiety, and I told him I had been engaging guides during the last fortnight.

"It would help if one could study a map beforehand. One doesn't like the responsibility of having to lead one's

*I began to doubt my memory after I had written this sentence; but I am right. On looking up the date of the publication of Sir Ian Hamilton's first despatch I find it was actually the seventh of July. There is no doubt that from first to last the censorship did as much to prolong the war as anything, and for all the good it did beyond catching a few cargoes of contraband and a few unimportant and inefficient spies those engaged on it might just as well have been playing Hunt the Slipper or Kiss in the Ring.

men into the unknown. This is a queer way of fighting a campaign."

"Success will depend on surprise," I told him. "We don't want to repeat that April business."

"You think we really shall surprise the Turks this time?"

"I feel fairly confident."

"No barbed wire entanglements in the sea?"

"I don't think so."

He laughed hollowly.

"A jolly thing to look forward to all the way, sweltering across the Mediterranean."

And then perhaps he felt he had made too much of the effect on their imagination of that first despatch, for presently he was supposing that they would be kept hanging about in Mytilene, practising embarkation indefinitely.

"It'll be a damn shame if they do make us hang about here," said somebody.

Indignation at the prospect of being kept waiting became general; but presently it subsided in the genial ceremony of drinking healths all round.

I seem to remember a speech from the Nomarch in his tinny French. People were passing round their menu cards to be signed. I felt nervously exhausted, and a black depression fell upon me. I tried to stretch my leg, wincing with the effort.

"Game leg?" asked somebody sympathetically.

"Yes, rather."

"Bad luck!"

I was on the point of passing my menu card round for signatures when I seemed to hear a voice whisper over my shoulder:

"They will soon be the signatures of ghosts."

I shivered and put the card in my pocket.

In the ship's smoking-room I had to do my best to evade

the questioning of various officers who had been too far away to hear my replies during dinner. Luckily Aubrey Herbert began to hold forth on the virtues of the Turks and drew the attention of the audience away from myself.

"Who's that fellow?" somebody asked me.

I told him.

"Member for Yeovil? I always thought politicians were rather ticks. He sounds a pretty good sort. There are a lot of Somerset men in this Division."

"The Irish Division, eh?"

"Oh, it's only about forty per cent. Irish."

Soon after this Aubrey and I left the *Andania*, for we had to be off very early in the morning.

Captain Grant asked me what was the matter, and when I told him 'sciatica' he at once insisted on my taking his bed for to-night. I protested against putting him to such inconvenience; but he was firm.

"My dear fellow, I've had sciatica myself, and I know what it means."

And nothing I could say would make him change his mind. The Surgeon in the *Canopus* was an Anglo-Hellene called Vlasto, and he put my leg quiet for the night, though I felt groggy when I went on board Strange's trawler about five o'clock next morning. Darwin was already looking wistfully round the pale turquoise expanse of Port Iero for an esplanade.

"Well, Darwin, enjoy your Turkish bath?"

"Yes, thank you, sir, moderately. Though I found it a bit hot."

"But that's the point of a Turkish bath."

"Yes, sir, I understand that. Only I think they worked it up a bit more than was quite necessary. I thought somebody had hit me on the head with a blessed hammer when I went through the door into one room. Still, it's what anyone would call very thorough. I suppose those Turks wear

turbans so as to mop up their perspiration. I noticed the fellow inside wore his towel after the style of a turban."

The anchor-chain rattled. A minute later, while we remained motionless it seemed upon the glassy water, the wooded slopes of Port Iero began to glide past. Mytilene was turning to a dream before my eyes, melting away from me with Heathcote-Smith and Hadkinson, with Vedova and the rare Ben Hodder, with Our Special Correspondent and the three tearful sisters, with the kindness of Captain Grant and the music of those pine-scented gardens, with the exuberant hospitality and good will of the Aristarchi household, with that so fateful dinner on board the *Andania*: Mytilene with her figs and olives and pomegranates, her moonlight and starving refugees, her poets, her beauty, and her dust.

The narrow dark-green waterway along which we were gliding, actually able here and there to touch with a cane the overhanging trees on either bank, had a Lethean solemnity this August morning. I was wondering sadly whether I should ever see Lesbos again. Could I have foreseen the comedy that would be played nearly two years later while sailing in the armed yacht *Aulis* up this same dark-green channel once again, I believe I should have had to laugh even upon this August morning.

We had for fellow passengers two midshipmen from the *Canopus* who were going to join the *Lord Nelson*. They seemed ridiculously young to be veterans of the Falkland Islands. One of them who might have been a fourth-form boy asked me if I would mind his consulting me on a rather important matter.

"The fact is, I've got rather a problem before me, sir."

"You have?"

"Yes, I'm really in a bit of a difficulty. You see, in my last term at Osborne, a fellow lent me ten bob, and this fellow's now the senior snotty in the *Lord Nelson*. Now do

you think he'll expect me to pay him back as soon as he sees me ? "

" Well, I should think he'd give you time. He's not likely to want the money very much at once."

" You don't think he will ? It's beastly awkward, isn't it ? Because I simply haven't got a halfpenny till I get my pay. I spent an awful lot on ices and other things last month."

" Oh, I'm sure he will be quite willing to wait till you get your pay. In fact I don't see what else he can do."

" It is beastly awkward for me though, sir, isn't it ? "

" Well, I shouldn't worry too much about it. You couldn't very well pay him back from the Falkland Islands."

" And there is one thing," the boy continued more hopefully. " I never asked him to lend me this ten bob. He offered to lend it to me. I think that makes a difference, don't you, sir ? "

" I do emphatically. Moreover, it shows that the senior snotty in the *Lord Nelson* is blessed with a generous nature. I feel quite confident in prophesying that he will give you time to pay your debt."

" Thanks very much, sir. I think you're right."

" I'm sure I am."

" You didn't mind my bothering you about this problem of mine ? "

" Not a bit."

" I was frightfully worried at first when I heard I was going to the *Lord Nelson*. I thought it was the worst thing that had ever happened to me in all my life."

And this boy was one of that ship's company which had expected to meet Von Spee's victorious squadron and die, when, her decks cleared for action, her gun crews at their stations, the old *Canopus* steamed into Port Stanley on that November morning in 1914. I do hope he will be an Admiral

one day. I feel sure that he will, and the senior snotty in the *Lord Nelson* too.

We reached Tenedos about four o'clock that afternoon. Aubrey Herbert had intended to go on in the trawler to Imbros; but, when he hurried ashore to obtain authentic news of the state of affairs on the Peninsula, somebody told him that the 'great push' had begun. He came tearing back on board in a state of intense excitement just before we were casting off.

"Look here, this push has started, and they tell me there's a chance of getting to Anzac from here. I don't want to miss any of it. Good-bye! Good-bye!"

He leapt ashore with his typewriter, followed by his man Christo with the kit. I never saw him again on this earth. And as I look back to that hurried parting I seem to see him suddenly engulphed in the roar and dust of battle. There was in his voice so urgent a note, as the echo of it comes back to me over the years, that I could almost swear he was already hearing the thunder of the guns on that tranquil quay in the shadow of the great castle walls. He had of all the many gallant gentlemen I have met the most endearing personality, and I have often compared him in my mind to Lucius Cary, the second Viscount Falkland, who was killed at the Battle of Newbury in 1643, the reading of Matthew Arnold's essay on whom was one of the great literary experiences of my youth. Aubrey Herbert had the same 'awkward gait', and I think his countenance, too, might be described as of 'no intellectual mark' and certainly, as I fancy it was Philemon Holland who wrote of his pupil, he too was 'of gentlest courtesy, of invincible courage, and of the purest sincerity. All mankind could not but love and admire him.' And like Falkland, Aubrey Herbert had in the words of Clarendon a 'flowing and obliging humanity, a primitive simplicity and integrity of life.'

By leaving the trawler at Tenedos Aubrey missed the

beginning of the Anzac attack; but he was in the thick of things as he always wished to be by Saturday morning, and how he survived these battles on the Peninsula is a marvel. He did survive them, however, and in 1916 he was in Mesopotamia. He died in England some years after the war was over.

I look at the inscription in his book *Mons, Anzac, and Kut* and read in his sprawling hand *from the Author in memory of much kindness and blue seas;* and turning the pages I find he writes of these days at Mytilene I have been describing:

*It was pleasant once again to be lord of the horizon, to have space through which to roam, and lovely hills and valleys to ride across in the careless scented air of the Mediterranean summer, with the sea shining a peacock-blue through the pines. It is this space and liberty that men cramped in a siege desire more than the freedom from the shelling of the enemy's guns. There was much, too, that was opéra bouffe in the Islands, that made a not unpleasant contrast to the general life at Anzac.*

I am as reluctant now to leave off writing about Aubrey Herbert as I was to leave him that afternoon of the fourth of August; but the trawler glides away from the crystal harbour of Tenedos. It will be idle to wave to him, for he would not see me if I waved to him across a room, so short-sighted is he. I watch him shuffling about on that quayside in his red slippers, peering up into the face of anyone who looks likely to be able to offer him the hope of a swift passage to Anzac. And if the likely informant be an officer, he will be staring in bewilderment at Aubrey's mock-khaki tie and asking himself if the amethyst lozenges with which it seems to be infested are the creation of the *mastika* he has been drinking instead of tea this afternoon.

It was already dusk when we reached the roadstead of Kephalo, which was crowded with shipping, portent of the hour now at hand. We dropped anchor near the *Lord*

*Nelson*, and I watched the two snotties go aboard their new ship. I tried to see how the creditor greeted his debtor; but I could not distinguish him in the fading light among the throng on board. And then for three hungry hours Darwin and I waited on the trawler, shouting appeals to passing small craft to take us off and land us anywhere even at K beach, a couple of weary sand-dogged miles from home. Strange had light-heartedly gone off to dine in the *Lord Nelson*, never supposing that we should be marooned in his trawler. I forget how we did eventually manage to reach the tents of G.H.Q.; but I know that it was an inky night and that I began to wonder if it still was G.H.Q., so many strange faces were there about and so much altered were the shapes and arrangement of the tents. I felt like Rip Van Winkle, and I could have asked myself if that sojourn of three weeks in Mytilene had been in fact a century's dreaming.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### BACK AT G.H.Q.

THE office tents and mess tents at G.H.Q. were now of the double-fly Indian variety with an inner lining of dark yellow and consequently much more comfortable. Nowadays, instead of the various members of the I tent being huddled together in a burning dust-blown draughty sack and writing at a rough trestle-table, we worked in a comparatively tepid seclusion that was almost cloistral. As one faced the harbour the first tent on the left was Colonel Ward's, in a corner of which sat Graves, now a happy warrior, compiling with passionate zest what must have been one of the best summaries of Intelligence kept during the war. In the next tent adjoining, Ian Smith and I sat opposite to one another, each with a table and a chair of his own, while beyond us at right angles sat George Lloyd and Deedes at their tables, Lloyd and Smith constituting Ia, Deedes and myself Ib. On my right sat an orderly in a perpetual state of being about to be sent on a message. The next tent along housed Eddie Keeling and a second cipher officer called Bass. Beyond them was a tent with eight clerks typing away on those Oliver machines that resemble the small organs played by romantic Saint Cecilias. The old I tent had but one entrance, and the only way to obtain a breath of air was to reef it at the bottom. The new tents had four doors with curtains which could be pulled across and four windows like birdcages. Opposite the line of I tents was the line of O tents. The result of the

arrival of these shelters had been to break up the sociable diphthong of the OI Mess into separate vowels; but I fancy that one or two people getting on each other's nerves had been as much responsible for the diæresis as the more spacious accommodation. No doubt the reason why it was only now that we were enjoying these double-fly tents had been the slowness of their arrival; but the effect of them just before Suvla was of trying to propitiate the perversity of the gods. It looked as if we were hoping to kid them that we had made up our minds to remain indefinitely on Kephalo so that we might tempt them into driving us off it in the wake of a victorious advance.

The I Mess included Maxwell, and much to Lloyd's indignation dear old Major Delacombe whose courteous and amiable presence he still regarded as a slight on the dignity of the Intelligence, and a serious menace to its effectiveness. Personally I found the new Mess a little depressing. Deedes and Lloyd both ate as if food were a waste of time and rarely spoke at meals; Colonel Ward was a sick man and unlikely to last out here much longer; Maxwell was always on the look out for insults to his catering; Ian Smith was by nature silent; Eddie Keeling was beginning to find military life a bore. So conversation at meals chiefly consisted of my attempts to dam with stories of my own Graves's unending flow of consular reminiscence, and this not because I was particularly anxious to be chattering myself, but because my sense of a flagging audience insisted on trying to make the piece go. Yet Graves's stories were all excellent. I remember one particularly good one about his walking in his garden when he was Consul-General at Salonica and of a match-box being flung over the wall and falling at his feet and of his picking it up and opening it and finding a human ear inside. I say I remember the story, but of course I do not, for the sequel which had something to do with brigands I completely forget. What I more perfectly

remember is that the others, who had let Graves's reminiscences get on their nerves, thought it was not a dinner-table story. For them that severed ear in a match-box detracted from the flavour of the severed leg of sheep with which we were teasing the flies at the time. All this sounds as if I were trying to represent myself superior to human weakness ; but it must be remembered that I had just come back from three entrancing weeks at Mytilene : the others had been languishing all that while on the sandy slopes of Kephalo.

There was a small brown volume published in 1866 which I commend to everybody who enjoys reading as much as I do by a warm fire of dreadful hardships. It is called *Castaway on the Auckland Isles : A narrative of the wreck of the 'Grafton' and of the escape of the crew after twenty months' suffering. From the private journals of Captain Thomas Musgrave.*

Suffering is a mild word for what that shipwrecked crew endured in those storm-swept islands of the Southern Hemisphere. Finally they managed to knock together a rickety craft, with which by incredible good luck they managed to make Invercargill in safety. The craft, however, was so 'tender' that two of the crew had to be left behind in what will seem to the reader the most real abomination of desolation he has ever imagined. Yet this is how Captain Musgrave describes the situation of George and the Cook when he came back six weeks later in a cutter to rescue them : 'They have been very much pinched for food since I left them, and on one occasion they were obliged to catch mice and eat them. Moreover, it appears that they could not agree, and, strange as it may seem, although there were only the two of them on the island, they were on the point of separating and living apart !'

This has remained in my mind as the classic instance of men getting on each other's nerves. Even Captain Musgrave,

a sober writer, was driven into using a note of exclamation. Amateurs of shipwrecks and hard voyages who succeed in finding this little volume in a second-hand book catalogue will be grateful to me for the advice not to let the occasion slip.

I am not suggesting that people at G.H.Q. were getting on one another's nerves to the extent that George and the Cook did; but the signs of nervous strain were most apparent when I came back from Mytilene after an absence of three weeks. Even the indomitable optimism of Sir Ian was having its bad moments. On the fifth of August he was writing in his diary: *The day before the start is the worst day for a commander. The operation overhangs him as the thought of another sort of operation troubles the mind of sick men in hospitals.*

As I read through the last few pages it is coming back to my memory that I have anticipated the break up of the joint OI Mess. On reflection I remember that this had not taken place before Suvla; but that in trying to convey the atmosphere of G.H.Q. at this date I should have supposed it had is significant, and so I shall not cancel what I have written about that diæresis. The incident which fixes for me with certainty that the original Mess was still in existence is my finding myself seated at lunch on either the fifth or sixth of August next to one of the new Generals and opposite another of them. The one next to me was Sir Frederick Stopford,* a man of great kindliness and personal charm, whose conversation at lunch left me at the end of the meal completely without hope of victory at Suvla. The reason for this apprehension was his inability to squash the new General opposite, who was one of the Brigadiers in his Army Corps. This Brigadier was holding forth almost truculently about the folly of the plan of operations drawn up by the General Staff, while Sir Frederick Stopford ap-

*Lt.-Gen. the Hon. Sir Frederick Stopford, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O.

peared to be trying to reassure him in a fatherly way. I looked along the table to where Aspinall and Dawnay were sitting near General Braithwaite; but they were out of earshot, and the dogmatic Brigadier continued unchallenged to enumerate the various military axioms which were being ignored by the Suvla plan of operations. For one thing, he vowed, most certainly he was not going to advance a single yard until all the Divisional Artillery was ashore. I longed for Sir Frederick to rebuke his disagreeable and discouraging junior; but he was deprecating, courteous, fatherly, anything except the Commander of an Army Corps which had been entrusted with a major operation that might change the whole course of the war in twenty-four hours.

Later that afternoon I told Val Braithwaite about the depressing conversation at lunch, and tried to turn what was now more than a mere intuition of impending calamity into a feeble joke.

"Stopford, Sitwell, and a Brigade-Major called Bask! Ominous names, Val. By the way, who was the General opposite to me at lunch?"

He told me, and I only refrain from giving the name because I am relying entirely on my recollection of the conversation and might be mistaken in the particular Brigadier, for there were so many new faces about during those two days.

"Well, General Dash is not going to advance a single yard until all the Divisional Artillery is ashore. He doesn't seem to grasp the elementary principles of this push as we've had it explained to us."

"Oh, well, he's a four-letter-man anyway," said Val loftily; and, William of Wykeham having disposed of General Dash in a phrase, there was no more to be said.

Besides the new faces of the various Generals and their Staffs there had been additions to the General Staff itself.

One of these was Major Hore-Ruthven, V.C.* who was not long afterward severely wounded at Suvla. He did once give me a momentary conviction that after all we really should take Constantinople. Mention has already been made of the horses which had been sent out for the Staff to ride onward in the wake of an irresistible advance to the shores of the Golden Horn. Those of the Staff who could ride and some of those who were less able (among the latter Orlo Williams who took a toss on the fifth of August which bruised every bone he had) used to exercise these horses during their brief leisure. One afternoon I saw 'Sandy' Hore-Ruthven riding back into the lines. He was wearing Jodhpur breeches, and the picture of him on that horse against the sky line of a sand-dune remains in my memory like a figure of supreme sculpture. At the moment, it was seeming to me, that nobody could look so well as that on a horse and not be destined to ride on to some historical event, that so much ease and grace of bearing could not be wasted merely on finding a few hundred yards fit for a gallop among the desiccated scrub and herbage of the promontory during the first days of that pregnant but so inscrutable August.

Another new face was Captain Vitale, an Italian officer, to whom Orlo Williams who had him under his wing made haste to introduce me. Vitale had been in Egypt and was at the stage of speaking English correctly and even fluently, but of not understanding more than one word in ten that were said to him. Before my return he had only been able to speak his own language with Orlo Williams and Eddie Keeling, and he welcomed my Anglo-Neapolitan accent, for he was himself from Campania. He was greatly worried about his position at G.H.Q., having been sent out here rather casually to be a liaison officer between General Cadorna and Sir Ian Hamilton. Sir Ian had not received the news of his appointment with much enthusiasm, and he

*Brig.-Gen. the Hon. A. G. A. Hore-Ruthven, V.C., K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O.

asked me to explain for him how uncomfortable he felt in obtruding himself at such a time. I took an opportunity to lay poor Vitale's embarrassment before Sir Ian, who said he had no objection at all to his being at G.H.Q., though he would have welcomed one of Cadorna's Divisions a good deal more heartily. Vitale felt, too, that the other members of the Staff were inclined to look askance at his presence. I assured him it was only the suspicious shyness of the Englishman which gave him that impression of coldness. I did not add that probably some of the manner was due to the Englishman's dread of being bored by a foreigner, through having to exert himself by talking less indistinctly than usual and about more general topics than he cares to discuss. Poor Vitale really suffered acutely from our insular coldness. I remember his going over to visit French G.Q.G. and his coming back full of smiles and sunlight like a child who has been to a jolly picnic to say how much he had enjoyed his day at Helles. The *déjeuner* had been most *simpatico*. Glasses had been raised to Italy. Everybody had drunk his health and expressed his pleasure at the visible token he offered that Italy was fighting beside her sister nation. For quite an hour or two after he had come back from that lunch Vitale was ready to believe that perhaps Italians were inclined to misjudge the arrogance of the French. Later in the autumn Vitale was taken seriously ill; but he recovered, and in the summer of 1917 he was appointed Military Attaché to the Italian Legation in Athens. His brother was a distinguished sinologue, professor of Chinese at one of the Universities. This brother some time after the war met his death in a tragic way, being shot in the Galleria at Naples by a man who was aiming at somebody else.

The French liaison officers got on well at G.H.Q. They all spoke English fluently, and one of them, Captain Bertier de Sauvigny, knew exactly what to say to please Englishmen.

Not that it required any special tact on his part, for he was a man of the world and a member of that small and exclusive society which has somehow managed to preserve through the Revolution, the Napoleonic wars, the Empire, the Commune and the Republic a flavour of the old regime. It was felt at G.H.Q. that Bertier was the right sort of person. Bertier recognized that the English set the mundane standard for sport and men's clothes, and he allowed to both the importance they deserved in civilization. He could not prove at G.H.Q. his *savoir faire* either over clothes or sport ; but the general feeling was that he would not tuck a white tie under the wings of his collar or pepper a beater or ride over hounds. Val Braithwaite would not have hesitated to introduce him to William of Wykeham : Powell would have felt safer with him at a shoot than with a poet. As one brother officer said to me, ' when you do meet a gentleman in France, it's extraordinary what a good fellow he can be,' and as another brother officer declared, ' what I like about Bertier is that you'd hardly think he was a Frenchman at all if he didn't wear those boots.' No, even Bertier had not succeeded in getting the right kind of field-boots. However, perhaps the cut and colour of his boots warmed up his English colleagues with a consciousness of their own tolerance.

" Morning, Bertier ! " and behind the sincere geniality of the greeting there was perhaps an intention to help him feel more at ease about those boots, as if he were being assured that it was not he, but the French bootmakers who were being blamed for them, and that in spite of wearing the wrong boots none of his English colleagues suspected him of being likely to commit any solecisms in mufti.

Of the other two French liaison officers Lieutenant Pelliot was a savant and Lieutenant La Borde was a bluff burly fair man who spoke English so perfectly and who had so completely the manner of a stout-hearted Rugby forward

that any failure of cordiality toward him would have had to be ascribed not to his nationality, but to a feeling that his school, though good at games, was otherwise not quite in the first rank.

It would be absurd to pretend that the General Staff credited French G.Q.G. at Helles with as much military ability as themselves. They did not. They regarded French fighting much as Dr. Johnson regarded a woman's preaching. Like a dog walking on his hind legs it was not done well, but they were surprised to find it done at all. The French and English were never intended by nature to fight side by side in joint expeditions. As early as the Third Crusade you get this attitude of mutual contempt for one another's method of warfare. At Gallipoli chiefly owing to the personal esteem in which Sir Ian Hamilton held General Gouraud this contempt was not at first so obvious; but after General Gouraud was wounded and left the Peninsula it was less carefully concealed. No doubt it was the same before Sebastopol; and as for Salonica, why, Geoffrey de Vinsauf, the chronicler of the *Itinerarium Regis Richardi*, might have been serving on the Intelligence at Army Headquarters, in such a similar spirit of criticism does he write about the French at Acre.

I feel that this chapter halts. It seems more than usually difficult to put together a clear portrait of anybody during these days just before Suvla. Perhaps we were all so much preoccupied with the future that the present was blurred. Luckily, I had plenty of work to do in getting my Newgate Calendar into order. I had returned from my stay in Mytilene with a mass of new material, and it now numbered nearly four hundred names. Every brief biography had to be checked and all the papers connected with it cross-indexed with the papers of other cases.

But there was one figure who during that time did make a most definite impression. This was Lieut.-Colonel Maurice

Hankey*, the Secretary to the Committee of Imperial Defence, to become next year Secretary to the War Cabinet, and the year after Secretary to the Imperial War Cabinet, the only man throughout the war for whom I never heard anybody suggest a better substitute. He had arrived here about the thirtieth of July, having been sent out by the Prime Minister instead of Mr. Winston Churchill. This change of plans had been a severe disappointment to Sir Ian Hamilton who had hoped for much from Mr. Churchill's personal survey of the situation. So when Colonel Hankey arrived instead he was not too cordial. His attitude may be judged from an excerpt from his diary on July 29th :

*Hankey is now busy going over the Peninsula. I have not seen much of him. A G.S. officer has been told off to help him along and see that he does not get into trouble. I am not going to dry nurse him.*

This sounds ungracious ; but it must be remembered that it was the fashionable thing at this date to sneer at Johnny Hamilton and his Staff. The feeling at Kephalo was that France among the heads would always be right, and Gallipoli always wrong. One or two of the King's Messengers had curried favour at G.H.Q. St. Omer by their tales of G.H.Q. Kephalo. The state of mind in France is well expressed by Sir Henry Wilson who had noted in his diary on July 17th that he had just given Foch his latest Dardanelles news and told him that he thought a success there would be a disaster. They were obsessed in France with the pathetic notion that they were only prevented from immediately breaking through the German lines because the Tenth, Eleventh and Thirteenth Divisions of Kitchener's Army had been sent out to Gallipoli. Yet, earlier in the year, Sir Henry Wilson had been writing of ' Kitchener's ridiculous armies,' three Divisions of which were now to make the difference between success and failure in France.

*Lt.-Col. Sir Maurice Hankey, G.C.B.

Moreover, about the same time as Colonel Hankey arrived at Gallipoli there arrived what Sir Ian calls a professional gossip from G.H.Q., France. As Sir Ian has withheld his name, I shall not give it here. But he was an exasperating and discouraging influence and a mischief maker of the first water. Ashmead-Bartlett's visit to London had given everybody at G.H.Q. the idea that the Press was hopelessly prejudiced against the whole operation. There was creeping into the minds of all on Kephalo the feeling that they were in the wrong theatre out here. None of them supposed that the War was going to last for more than three years yet and that he would have plenty of time to distinguish himself elsewhere, should the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force dissolve. His military future now seemed to depend entirely on the outcome of Suvla. It was not that Colonel Hankey was regarded as an enemy of the New Landing ; but his visit of inspection for the Prime Minister was considered an infringement of professional privileges by an amateur. However, he was not looked upon as a serious danger, for nobody supposed that this little Marine, who for so many years had been out of uniform that he used to admit how strange he felt in it, was likely to achieve much one way or the other. His bald bulging benevolent head, his slow quiet voice and cautious movements seemed to belong to a man dug out from an obscurity and retirement even more profound than that of some of the officers of the new Divisions. Colonel Hankey was as a matter of fact still two years on the sunny side of forty when he visited Gallipoli ; but I always heard him alluded to as if he were trembling on the verge of eighty. If sagacity had counted, he might easily have been credited with four score ; but I am afraid that nobody thought him particularly sagacious when he first arrived. It was probably the slowness of his gait, the gravity of his expression, the quiet earnest modulation of his voice which made him seem so old.

My own meeting with him came about through my longing to possess a set of Marine buttons, which not even yet had I been able to satisfy. Hearing that a dug-out Marine Colonel who had had something to do with the Prime Minister was roaming round the Peninsula, I determined to approach him on the subject of buttons and extract from him a promise to send me a set when he got back to England.

"Buttons?" Colonel Hankey gently echoed, when I had entered his tent on Kephalo and asked him if by any chance he had with him a spare set he could make over to me. "Well, I'm the last person to apply to for buttons. But before I go back I'll let you have the set I'm wearing, if you can find any kind of substitute for my own. Any kind," he went on with a grave and courteous kindliness of assurance that seemed to imply he would accept some pebbles from the beach if anybody could bore the necessary holes to sew them on his service-jacket.

"I say, that's really most awfully good of you."

"Not at all. I'll be only too delighted to help you in any way."

And then my face fell, for eyeing his uniform covetously I saw that his buttons were the spherical buttons of a Blue Marine, whereas I was a Red Marine, or perhaps I should say a Pink Marine, being after all but a pale edition of the genuine article. I remember somebody's once asking, 'Oh, were you one of Eddie Marsh's Marines?' in the same way as old regulars talked about the New Army as Fred Karno's Army or laughed at the A.S.C. as Ally Sloper's Cavalry.

"I'm afraid you're Marine Artillery," I sighed. "So your buttons won't do for me."

"You're an R.M.L.I. man?"

"Well, I'm really only a temporary officer. Just R.M."

"In that case I don't see why you shouldn't wear R.M.A. buttons with as much propriety as Light Infantry ones."

I told him I did not feel convinced that it would not be a breach of Marine etiquette to do so, and he laughed gently.

"Well, to tell you the truth, it's so long since I wore uniform that these things have come to seem tremendously unimportant. I really don't see why you shouldn't have my buttons, and I'm going to bequeath them to you. But when I get back to London, I'll make inquiries and send you out a correct set."

He was mopping his big benevolent forehead and struggling out of a Sam Brown belt after a long toilsome day on the Peninsula in uniform of a khaki that was meant for a cooler climate in summer than Gallipoli. Supposing that he wanted to rest before dinner, I thanked him for his kindness and was going to leave him to himself, when he asked me to sit down and have a talk.

"Now, look here," he began, fixing me with that earnest regard of his, "I want you to tell me quite frankly what you think about the situation out here."

Hankey-Pankey they used to call him at Versailles when he was holding together the Peace Conference, and if he managed to impress and charm the Great Men there as easily as he charmed an unimportant subaltern of his own Corps at a critical hour in the destiny of their country I am not surprised by his nick-name, though let me add it was an affectionate nick-name. As I have said, he was the only man of mark in the long procession of notables that moved across the stage of the War, for whom I never heard anybody propose a substitute or even an understudy.

"And look here," Colonel Hankey continued still more earnestly, his bald head—or was it not baldness, but a high bulging forehead?—becoming to my fancy more amply domed every instant. "I want you, when you are talking to me quite frankly, to remember that you are not talking to the average soldier man. I have imagination."

Set down like that such a remark may sound pretentious;

but the reader must have a little imagination himself and supply the tone of gentle reassurance in which it was uttered.

"First of all, do you think Sir Ian Hamilton is the right man to command out here?"

I looked at him, I suppose, suspiciously.

"I know such a question will sound odd, and I shall perfectly understand if you tell me that you would rather not answer it. But I have a theory that one only arrives anywhere near the truth by trying to reach it through all kinds of channels."

I told him that for me to attempt to estimate Sir Ian Hamilton's military capacity for the task before him was out of the question.

"For instance," I said, "for me to express an opinion about the comparative advantages of Bulair and Suvla for a landing would be ridiculous. But I have a definite opinion about the ultimate aim of this Expedition, and the fact that Sir Ian believes so passionately in the vital importance of taking Constantinople prejudices me at once in favour of him as Commander-in-Chief. Then again he has always been opposed to conscription, and I am so strongly against conscription that if we have to use it to win the war I shall consider the war lost. It seems to me that if this Expedition fails it will fail because Sir Ian has been set an impossible task, not because he has made mistakes. If the Expedition fails, many will blame Winston Churchill; but they will blame him for every reason except the one reason for which it might be possible to blame him, and that is for carrying it through in the teeth of obtuse and unimaginative opposition.* It may, I think, be possible for a future

* When I was waiting at Capri in a state of agitation over the delay in getting out to Gallipoli, I tried to engage the interest of Admiral Sir Arthur Wilson (who was a cousin of my wife's) to obtain my orders. He wrote curtly in answer that he had nothing to do with the Dardanelles Expedition and knew nothing about it. That was the first inkling I had of the feeling against it at home.

historian to say that, though Winston Churchill was entirely right about the strategic necessity to take Constantinople, he was wrong not to perceive that everybody else in high position and power at home had no will to make the attempt succeed. And I think if I were to criticize Sir Ian it would be because he has to some extent done the same in the field as Winston Churchill at his desk. He has, I think, sometimes been too optimistic about the second-best with which he has been provided when he should have resigned rather than allow this Expedition to be treated as a side-show. He is perhaps too much aware that he is regarded with suspicion for what one may call the Celt in him, and perhaps that leads him to accentuate too much the man of mere action. I doubt if he has forced with enough pertinacity the larger issues of this Expedition upon the people at home. He has left that job to Winston Churchill, who in his turn has concentrated too much in his persuasiveness on the simplicity of the naval and military operation. In his heart Sir Ian must know that Lord Kitchener has no grasp at all of the situation out here ; but he cannot bring himself to tell him as much in so many words. All our leaders suffer from an exaggerated sensitiveness over the feelings of other leaders. In fact the whole nation suffers from an excess of politeness. We are afraid of hurting the feelings of the French, and so we compromise. Either it is vital to force the Dardanelles or it is not. If it is, then this must not be regarded as a side-show. But I can't help feeling that Sir Ian, rather than hurt Lord Kitchener's feelings, is inclined to acquiesce in its being regarded as a side-show. I have heard it said cynically here that somebody—I shall not mention a name, but you will guess to whom I refer—that somebody has so worked things that, if the Expedition succeed, he will have all the credit and that, if it fail, Sir Ian will have all the blame. That it should be possible for an acute observer to say this may indicate a line of criti-

cism ; but my own belief is that Sir Ian with marvellous troops has achieved the impossible, and I doubt if any other general could have done it, for whatever may be the feeling now, due to hope deferred, there is no doubt that Sir Ian did look like a leader, sound like a leader, and act like a leader last April."

"And this new landing ? "

"It ought to come off. It will be a complete surprise to the enemy."

"You don't sound very positive."

"It's nothing but a presentiment, and I'd rather not argue from presentiments."

This of course is only the gist of what I said to Colonel Hankey. It represents what I thought at the time and it represents what I think now. Doubtless during the several talks I had with him both before and after the Suvla landing I said a lot more, for every time I talked with him he gave me fresh hope that he would when he got back to England put Gallipoli into proper perspective. It was useless, however, for me to try to persuade the General Staff that his visit out here was likely to help the future of the Expedition when he got home. They wrapped themselves up in prejudice and would not hear a word in his favour.

There comes back to me the expression on Val Braithwaite's face as I met him walking along and flourishing the draft of a telegram.

"Listen to this," he spluttered indignantly. "*For the Prime Minister. Am getting astride of the situation here. Suggest staying on for few more days. Hankey.* Getting astride of the situation ! " Val repeated scornfully, for the metaphor was too much for his Wykehamist sense of what was permissible language in a military telegram.

"But the phrase is quite an ordinary one, Val."

"Yes, it might be all right for that fellow Guy in your book, but dash it ! Getting astride of the situation ! Why,

it sounds ridiculous, and anyway how can he know whether he has got astride of the situation, as he calls it ? "

" Well, I think you're all making a mistake in being so prejudiced against him."

But Val would not listen, and went snorting off to have the offensively ' affected ' phrase enciphered.

Sir Ian Hamilton who had started by being as much prejudiced against Colonel Hankey as anybody at G.H.Q. learnt to respect that sagacious, somewhat grubby, clear-eyed, bald, big-headed little man, for when he left Kephalo on the nineteenth of August he wrote in his diary :

*Hankey . . . has been a real help. The Staff has never quite cottoned to the chiel amang us takin' notes, but that is, I think, from a notion that it is not loyal to Lord K. to press the P.M.'s P.S. too closely to their bosom. From my personal standpoint, it will be worth anything to us if, amidst the flood of false gossip pouring out by this very mail to our Dardanelles Committee, to the Press, to Egypt, and to London Drawing Rooms, we have sticking up out of it, even one little rock in the shape of an eyewitness.*

I only wish that, when Colonel Hankey passed on from Mr. Asquith to be the confidant of Mr. Lloyd George, he had been sent out to take a look at the state of affairs in Athens about the middle of 1916. It would not have been my fault if after such a visit the same hesitating course had been steered by Great Britain through the cross-currents of the Balkan situation.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE DARK NIGHT OF THE SUVLA LANDING

AT half-past three on the afternoon of the sixth of August the thunder of the guns on Helles travelling across the clear air to Kephalo proclaimed that the general attack ordered there had begun. This was intended to occupy the Turks in the Southern Zone and prevent their moving northward to reinforce the defenders above Anzac, where the Australians and New Zealanders launched their attack at half-past five. The gunfire pulsated on the still air, and by seven o'clock the whole length of the long line of tawny cliffs was twinkling with starry shells. All through the afternoon the troops of the Eleventh Division had been embarking in the new armour-plated motor-lighters that from their appearance were known as beetles. Ten thousand troops embarked at Imbros; six thousand were on the way from Mudros. From Mytilene four thousand more were steering northward into the unknown out of the unknowable, for half an hour after the last trawler had left Port Iero *Canopus* had deliberately fouled the cable so that no news of their departure could be signalled from enemy agents in Lesbos.

The evening was brilliantly clear: the sea was calm. About half-past seven I stood above the G.H.Q. camp and looked down across the waters of Kephalo to where on the level land beyond K beach hundreds of evacuated tents clustered like ghosts in the twilight. The roadstead was thronged with shipping; and the smoke of many funnels

belching into the clear air and making turbid a sky slashed with the crimson of a long slow sunset suggested the glimpse of a manufacturing town in a hollow of the Black Country beheld from some Staffordshire height. One after another the ships moved out of the harbour: great liners like the *Minneapolis* with the newspaper correspondents on board, destroyers, trawlers, beetles, battleships, and many others. By half-past seven the roadstead was empty. The metallic blues and greens and blood-reds in the water had turned to a cold dull grey. Eastward the ever increasing surge and thunder of the guns : here an almost horrible quiet. At ten o'clock the new landing was due to begin. Hardly anybody spoke at dinner. Jan Smith had gone over to Suvla, so George Lloyd, Deedes and I drew lots for the three shifts of sitting up for Intelligence signals. Lloyd drew ten to one, Deedes four to seven, and I to my great pleasure the middle shift from one to four. This was the time, we reckoned, when we should be hearing of important events at Suvla. By now the heavy presentiment of failure had vanished. I was feeling positive that during my shift great news would come through which I should remember to my dying day. I was too much excited to go to bed, and from ten till twelve I worked at that absurd memorandum on the Müller family in Mytilene, and my proposed scheme for their elimination. At midnight I went across with George Lloyd to the O tent where we drank cocoa. No news of any kind had yet arrived ; but we told ourselves that we really must not expect any quite as soon as this. Lloyd was listless and downhearted. I urged him to go to bed, such a headache had he, and as I walked with him to his tent he told me how much he hated being here and doing nothing while this push was on.

" I'm doing no good at G.H.Q. to anybody," he said bitterly. " If I were with my regiment I should feel more respect for myself."

It was difficult to reassure George Lloyd when he succumbed to these self-searching moods of despair. I left him and walked back to the O tent after telling the orderly in I to bring across any telegrams. By one o'clock there was nobody left in the O tent except Guy Dawnay, Cecil Aspinall, Barttelot, and Cipher-major Orlo Williams with his code books. Sir Walter Barttelot was a Coldstreamer who had joined the Staff while I was at Mytilene. He was a quiet attractive man, the head of one of the most ancient families in England. His father had been killed in South Africa : he himself was to be killed in 1918. I felt that depression was setting in here under the strain of waiting for news, and I tried to amuse them by enacting a series of imaginary scenes between various members of the General Staff. Apparently I was successful in being funny, for Orlo Williams told me the other day that one of his memories of Suvla night was trying not to laugh, because in the bruised condition of his bones after falling from his horse two days before every laugh was an agony. However, I could not go on being funny indefinitely, and we were soon sitting anxiously waiting for news.

A telegram arrived from Bulgaria. I do not recall what it said, but after looking up this date in Colonel Napier's* book *A Military Attaché in the Balkans* I surmise that it may have given some account of Sir Valentine Chirol's visit to Serbia with Mr. Gregory† of the Foreign Office and of their pessimistic departure from Sofia to Bukarest. The sixth of August was the day when the Tsar of Russia, the King of England, the King of Italy, and the President of the French Republic, each sent a note to Serbia appealing to her to surrender Macedonia to Bulgaria for the common good. How futile such heavily-gilded diplomacy now seems ! To force the Dardanelles was the way to keep Bulgaria from

* Lt.-Col. the Hon. H. D. Napier, C.M.G.
† J. D. Gregory, C.B., C.M.G.

signing that military convention with Germany, Austria, and Turkey, which was now reported imminent. Possibly Colonel Napier, the Military Attaché at Sofia, telegraphed to know what the situation was at Gallipoli. It seems to be coming back to my memory that this was the gist of his telegram, for I seem to hear Aspinall saying with a curt laugh that he should very much like to be able to tell him. Anyway, the telegram from Bulgaria was tossed aside to be dealt with in the morning.

A few minutes later another telegram came in about stores ; but there was no word of any landing by the Tenth and Eleventh Divisions of the Ninth Army Corps. Then at last a signal from Anzac was brought in. Aspinall tore it open and flung it down on the table, frowning. I read it :

*When does the next hospital ship come? This one is full.*

A picture of the wounded men lying on the beach under the stars of that dark night, whose darkness was so vital to the success of the operation, must have been in the minds of all of us. I was longing to do something and suggested taking the telegram along to General Birrell, the Director of Medical Services. His tent was easy to find, for he had managed to secure for himself one of those double-fly Indian tents, which were a different shape from the hot cones in which the rest of us slept.

" Who's there ? " came the General's muffled voice as I stood in the entrance and waved my lantern at him.

" I have a cable from Anzac, General. It says : ' When does the next hospital ship come ? This one is full.' "

I heard the breath of General Birrell, whose conversation with me about books in an earlier chapter may be remembered, coming in puffs of indignation from the bedclothes.

" Tell them General Birrell does not know," he answered fretfully.

" I really cannot send a signal like that," I told him. " I'm sitting up to take the Intelligence telegrams. I have

nothing to do with any others. If you wish to send such an answer, sir, you must really send it yourself."

"What time is it?" he asked.

"Close on two o'clock."

"And do you mean to tell me I've been woken up at such an hour to answer a question like that? I never heard of anything so completely ridiculous in my life."

"Ridiculous or not, you must either get up and answer this telegram yourself, or let it go unanswered till morning."

"It's perfectly abominable," the old gentleman groaned.

"Well, I can't stay any longer," I said. "Do you wish me to go back to the Operations tent and tell Colonel Aspinall that you resent being woken up to answer stupid questions?"

"I feel most strongly that I have been woken up in a totally unnecessary way," General Birrell insisted.

"I expect they are feeling rather strongly about things on the beach at Anzac just now."

"But what can I do? I haven't the least idea when the next hospital ship is going to Anzac."

"Really, General, I must ask you to take this telegram without further discussion. If you do not intend to get out of bed and send a reply, you can initial it and put the time it was shown to you. Then I will take it back to the O tent."

"Well, I suppose I'd better send a reply myself"

I heard a creaking of elderly limbs as the D.M.S. got out of bed. After fumbling about with an electric torch he managed to cover his long lean figure with a woollen dressing-gown. Then he lit his lantern and, snatching the telegram from me, he started off to send his reply. I left him threading his way by lantern light among the tent-ropes and grumbling to himself as the night air played round his ankles.

When I got back to the O tent I found that Cecil Aspinall

after giving moustaches and beards to all the ladies in the weekly illustrated papers was now drawing wooden lady after wooden lady of his own invention on sheets of foolscap. Guy Dawnay made himself some cocoa. I sat listlessly reading stale *Tatlers* and *Sketches*. The matter in them seemed almost as fatuous as poor old muddle-headed General Birrell.

Two o'clock went by without further news. Guy Dawnay and I walked out to listen for firing northward. The night was utterly still. General Birrell had gone back to his disturbed sleep. Over the Peninsula the blood-red horn of the waning moon just risen was clawing up at the sky. A rocket flamed on the horizon. A ship was hooting mournfully while it waited to be allowed in through the Kephalo boom. At half-past two somebody in the O tent produced a bottle of Horlick's Malted Milk Lozenges, and we all sat sucking them in a melancholy. Aspinall must have drawn forty ladies by now, each one becoming a little more wooden than her predecessor. I tried to cheer up things by reading out my scheme for kidnapping the Müller family. Guy Dawnay suggested that I should submit a scheme for kidnapping some of the Brigadiers of the new Divisions.

"Good god!" Aspinall rapped out suddenly. "They must be ashore by now."

A telegram came in to say the fouled cable had been mended. That brigade and a half from Mytilene should be nearly off Suvla at this moment.

At half-past three I went outside again to listen for gunfire. The moon, clear of the mirk of the Peninsula heights by now, was shining very yellow in the eastern sky. But there was no news yet of the Ninth Army Corps, though the first grey of dawn was perceptible.

Then at ten minutes to four an orderly came in with a signal.

"At last," cried Aspinall, tearing open the envelope.

Then "Damn!" he groaned, tossing the piece of paper down.

'*Bamboozled* 800 *punctured*,' said the message.

It was only a code message for the Quartermaster-General's department; but it seemed as if some mocking demon had chosen those two words to tell us that the Suvla Landing had failed.

"But they must be ashore by now," said Aspinall miserably.

It was now four o'clock and time to wake Deedes for the shift from four to seven. But before I woke him I ran down under the paling sky to the Signal tents and asked the sergeant in desperation if there was still no news from Suvla.

"Only this, sir," he said, "from the signaller on the New Landing. It was in reply to us, for it seemed so funny not hearing anything from over there."

He wrote out on a form that the signaller of the New Landing reported he could now hear hot musketry and the sound of bursting shells behind him.

I hurried back with this message to the O tent.

"Well, they've landed anyway," said Guy Dawnay grimly.

"Yes, they've landed," Aspinall agreed. "But this is what we ought to have heard three hours ago."

I left them to discuss for the twentieth time what could have been holding up the operation, and went along to wake Deedes, whose tent was at the top of the Lines. The moon was now much higher, a frail silver slip of a moon turning to ivory in the pale eastern sky. The little wind of dawn was lisping through the withered herbage and ruffling the sand here and there with cat's-paws. The guns had started to growl again. I found Deedes already in his dressing-gown, and as he moved nattily about his tent he would stop from time to time to listen if the kettle on his

spirit-lamp was beginning to boil. In the glimmering twilight of dawn he looked more than ever like a pious church-worker getting up to attend early Service. I told him about the disappointments of the night. He made no comment, but advised me to get off to bed. So I left him and walked down through the rows of tents which stood out against the wan air of dawn as black as the night fast receding into the west.

It was a long time before I fell sound asleep, for I kept waking to clutch at phantoms. There was no vestige of hope left in my mind that the Suvla Landing could now succeed. I felt as if I had watched a system crash to pieces before my eyes, as if I had stood by the deathbed of an old order. The guns I could hear might have been a growling that foretold the murderous folly of the Somme. The war would last now until we had all turned ourselves into Germans to win it. An absurd phrase went singing through my head. *We have lost our amateur status to-night.* It was foolish for me who had been old enough to appreciate the muddle of the South African War to go on believing in the practical value of the public-school system. I had really for long mistrusted it, but since coming out here I had fallen once more under its spell as I might have fallen under the spell of a story by Rudyard Kipling. Yes, the War would go on now. I must remember to write home to-morrow for more woollen underclothes. We should be here indefinitely now. Queer that a man like Sir Ian Hamilton so perfectly cut out to ride into Constantinople at the head of a victorious army should be thwarted of his hope. He would appear so Wellingtonian, charging up Achi Baba on a black horse and looking back over his shoulder to wave on . . . the picture faded as I woke up fully again . . . and then I trembled once more upon the verge of sleep with a vision of Sir Ian Hamilton standing beside a drum, the smoke of battle beyond his slim eager form, a field-marshal's baton

grasped tightly in one hand, the injured hand by his side lending an added dignity to his appearance like Nelson's missing arm . . . the smoke of battle . . . and along the horizon the domes and minarets of Constantinople. People years hence would stare at the heroic picture and never know what the man himself would have suffered before he could stand proudly up like that as a conqueror . . . once more I was fully awake, and that heroic battle-piece had faded. There were no domes and minarets along the horizon. There was only the long line of tawny cliffs and the sun fast overtaking a frail moon in the bland sky of morning. There were only the flies wandering over my mosquito-net, and an overwhelming desire to sleep while the day was still cool. Last night must somehow be separated from any other night by sleep. It had been too profoundly moving an experience to melt irritably into another dusty day. It must be enshrined in sleep, and remembered all the rest of my life as a dream in which I had beheld so many other people's dreams topple over and crash. And away in London they would be getting up presently, unaware that during the night the old London had vanished.

I had intended to take the opportunity of this chapter to narrate the long tale of misfortune which culminated in the disaster of Suvla ; but I should add nothing to what has already been told. Those who wish to see the hostile gods marshalled against the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force are recommended to read the first hundred pages of General Aspinall-Oglander's account of the Military Operations at Gallipoli. The reader who follows my advice may picture the future historian sitting that night of the sixth of August in the Operations tent and giving beards and moustaches to all the pretty ladies in the illustrated weeklies. Probably the last picture that crossed his mind was that of himself years later sitting down to write the history of that Expedition, the objective of which was to be finally lost during

those three hours he was giving ladies beards or drawing beauties of his own invention. He was not an historian then, but a heartbroken Staff Officer who was realizing that all his work during the last month was going to count for nothing.

I slept on through the morning, and at lunch in the Mess tent I found the depression less general than I expected. The sound of gunfire was ceaseless. In the great vacuum of news from Suvla Deedes received word that Stavro Vassilaki hiding among the hills of Imbros had been recaptured and was now again under arrest. It was decided that I should walk over to the Rest Camp on Sunday and examine him.

## CHAPTER XX

### AFTER SUVLA

VITALE accompanied me to the Rest Camp on that heavy hot Sunday. I was feeling ill, and the soft seaweed-matted sand seemed endless in its bistre monotony. The feet of a camel would have contented me : I did not demand the wings of a dove. I do not remember clearly what we talked about; but probably Vitale asked me once more to tell him quite frankly if his presence at G.H.Q. was resented, and if he did, I would have assured him, as we went pounding along through the loathsome softness of the sand, that any lack of warmth he had fancied in the Staff's attitude was due entirely to the notorious English reserve. He would have told me how much embarrassed he felt whenever he sent telegrams in code to Italian Headquarters and how much he hoped that people out here would feel certain that he should send no information they would not wish to be sent. And in telling me this he would have left on my mind an impression of sincerity and delicacy, which, before he was to be struck down with a temporary paralysis on this very road we were now walking, was to impress equally his brother officers, so that all at G.H.Q. were sorry to lose him when he was invalided back to Italy, not to recover his health for many months.

The Rest Camp was not to be recognized as the same place of even a month ago when I had pursued hence Pascalides across the roadstead; as for the straggling little hamlet of two months ago through which Orlo Williams and

I had passed on our way to Panaghia, that was no longer imaginable. Its idyllic peace and Arcadian squalor had given way to rows of tents and huts and a noisy procession of traffic. At the Provost-Marshal's office I inquired where the prisoner was lodged and was directed to a barbed-wire entanglement on the left of the wide central road of the camp, along which stirring up the dust went backward and forward a ceaseless stream of men and mules and carts. Four guards with rifles and fixed bayonets stood at the four corners of this wired enclosure, in the middle of which was the canvas prison-cell of Stavro Vassilaki. One of the guards stepped forward and unfastened the high wire gate. He had the air of a keeper admitting me to the den of a wild animal.

"Do you wish me to be present while you examine the prisoner, sir?" he inquired in the confidential voice of a butler ascertaining one's taste in wine.

"No, I think I'll probably get out again with my life," I told him.

He grinned broadly, and then feeling that perhaps his smile had widened beyond the mark of perfect respect he gave me an extra ceremonious salute as he stepped aside for me to pass within.

The change in the appearance of the wretched Vassilaki since I had last seen him in the Hotel Grande Bretagne at Mytilene shocked me. Nothing at all was now left of the self-confident, raucous, flashily dressed, oily American-Greek. Instead of the bouncing dago I saw a dejected creature seated on an empty petroleum tin, his head bowed between his knees. In one corner of the stifling tent was a horrible-looking loaf of bread, in another a pannikin of water in which were floating a dozen drowned flies. He was dressed in trousers and shirt much torn and soiled. One of the buttons at the back of his trousers was missing, and the lopsided appearance of his braces added a last touch to his

air of miserable caducity. His bearing and attire were melancholy enough, but his face when he looked up at me was worse. He had not shaved for several days. His cheeks were scratched with brambles. His eyes were ringed. The sweat had dried upon his dusty cheeks. His unbrushed hair was full of bits of twigs and withered herbage. His lips were cracked and blistered. On seeing who it was he jumped up and effusively offered me the petroleum tin, on which I balanced myself while he squatted on the ground opposite.

"Well, Vassilaki, you've got yourself into a nice mess."

"Oh, my Gard, Captain, don't I know what a mess I'm in! But, Captain, I guess you're going to save me. You know I never done no spying. You'll speak for my good character, Captain. You couldn't do otherwise, for I'm a man who never hurt nobody or nothing in all his life."

"Well, what on earth did you go and escape for?"

"Captain Mackenzie," moaned the wretched creature, bursting into tears, "I thought I was going mad. You see, the gentlemen outside with the guns, they kept telling me I was going for be shot to-morrow morning early, and I didn't know maybe I wouldn't be, and I scratched away the sand under the wire and I got clear of the camp and I was hid some days and nights up in the hills and I hadn't nothing to eat, though I wouldn't have ate if I had, because I was all the time retching and vomiting, and it was through me retching like that they found me at last and brought me back and shut me up here. But, Captain, I swear before Gard I won't escape no more. That's honest, Captain."

"No, I don't think you'll escape again," I agreed. A panther might have found it difficult to escape from the entanglement in which he was now imprisoned.

"Oh, my Gard, Captain, I don't know what I done to get in such trouble. I never hurt nobody in all my life. Mr.

Vedova will speak for me. I know he will. Mr. Vedova always guessed Mr. Thompson was hard on me."

For two hours I questioned the wretched creature in that stifling tent until what with the reek of his stale body and the torment of the flies I began to feel as completely degraded a specimen of human nature as the prisoner himself. I have not mentioned that the Vassilaki house in Tenedos had been thoroughly searched, that Yanni, the younger brother, was now under arrest at the Marines' Camp, and that nothing in the least incriminating had been found either on him or in the house. To be sure, this was no proof of innocence, for there had been plenty of time to destroy incriminating documents or other evidence. Still, the fact remained in the prisoner's favour that nothing had been found. And gradually, as I went over and over again the suspicious circumstances, questioning him each time more closely and finding each time that these circumstances were susceptible of an alternative and innocent explanation, I began to decide in my own mind that the behaviour of the Vassilaki family had been entirely prompted by a low kind of commercial cunning, and that the more sinister motive attributed to their activities had no basis in fact. The several discrepancies in the various explanations Stavro had already given of his conduct were not, when gone into more fully, really damning. I was inclined to think that most of them could be put down to the Southerner's invariable conviction that he is a cleverer man than the Northerner, to that and a natural instinct of Mediterranean humanity never to part at first with the whole of the exact truth. The spirit of getting the better of a commercial adversary would always be uppermost in such a man. His desperate attempt to escape, which superficially might be taken as an indication of guilt, to my mind argued rather that the man was a much stupider fellow than he thought himself. Not that he still thought himself so smart.

I never saw any man nearer to complete self-abasement.

Gradually the old conception of the Vassilaki family vanished, and whatever element of doubt still remained in their case I decided could be met by having Stavro and the rest of the family expelled from the Area of Operations. I was thankful to feel convinced that it would not be my duty to recommend a course of procedure which might end in the firing-squad, and though higher authorities might decide to intern him in Malta for the duration of the war I had made up my mind by now to advise Deedes that there was not even enough evidence against him for that, provided of course I was able to demonstrate successfully to Deedes that the numerous small links which seemed to form a chain of guilt could, by not presuming that guilt, just as easily combine to form a chain of innocence. The weakest point of our case was that no further evidence against him had been provided by the Athens Bureau to support its original denunciation. We had not even been able to obtain the name of the informant whose allegations had led to the despatch of that first telegram. Luckily for the Vassilaki family Deedes was already as sceptical as I was learning to become myself of the value of such vague denunciations, and if I advised the expulsion of the Vassilakis from the Area of Operations he was not the one to fight for a man's death or his internment in Malta, merely because in a fit of desperate terror he had escaped from his guards. As for Colonel Ward, with whom the final decision about Vassilaki would rest, he would merely grunt:

"Well, I could have told you a month ago that it was probably nothing but a lot of bloody rot. All telegrams about spies are, in my opinion."

And after swatting a couple of flies he would return with puckered brow to the more congenial task of finding some elusive Turkish regiment.

I suppose something in my manner had put hope into Stavro Vassilaki's heart, for suddenly he knelt down in front of me and, seizing my hand, began to kiss it rapidly.

"Captain Mackenzie," he sobbed, and, hot though the inside of that tent was, his tears falling upon my hand were hotter. "Captain, I think you know I'm not a spy. Captain, you're going to save my life, and my poor old father will remember you when he prays in church. He's a most gar-dam religious old man, my poor old father is, and he won't never forget your goodness. Oh, Captain Mackenzie, I suffered something terrible. When they took me away in that ship I sure thought I was dead. And I retched all the way up from Mytilene, and when they shut me up behind that wire and the gentlemen with the guns begun swearing me and telling me I was no gar-dam good and must be shot to-morrow morning I was going mad. I thought of my poor old father and what would happen to him if I was shot, and my sisters who I give six hundred drachmas on board the steamer . . . and whether I'll ever see the value for that six hundred drachmas I don't know, because you know what girls are, Captain. Give them six hundred drachmas and they'll go and spend them just like they was nothing at all. But now I've seen you, Captain, I don't feel so bad, because I know you'll be my protector and the protector of my family."

"Well, don't assume too much," I said, rising to go. "*I* may accept your explanation of all the stupid things you've said and done, but it by no means follows that other people will. You're not out of the wood yet."

"No, but, Captain, I swear before Gard and may I be shot to-morrow if I'm not saying the truth, that wood I sold to the aerodrome was only because I saw an occasion for making a little bit of money, and which I needed badly, Captain, for I was not earning hardly nothing in Tenedos, and those Tenedos people, they're not properly civilized

peoples, Captain ; they'd steal from you and laugh behind your back. I don't know what put me into the way to come to Tenedos. But they were telling such stories down in Athens of the money to be made up at the Dardanelles that I . . ."

" Well, don't go over it all again. What I want you to realize is that you're not clear yet. And don't go trying to escape again, or I'll be able to do nothing for you."

" No, Captain, I won't. I wouldn't have escaped before, only those gentlemen told me I must be shot to-morrow morning. They didn't meant to frighten me, but I was feeling so sick, it kinda got me all upset."

We were outside the tent now, and the sentry by the gate was wearing an expression of injured but always quite rigid dismay at the prisoner's suggestion about the conversation of his guards. Along the wide road in front of the entanglement the stream of men and mules and carts went past unceasingly, raising a perpetual cloud of acrid dust. The flies sizzled round the stale sweat of the haggard unshaven prisoner. I thought that never in my life should I perceive again such a complete expression of human misery and degradation as he presented, nor such detestable discomfort as his surroundings. No wonder the poor wretch had in desperation tried to escape. No wonder tears had choked him when he tried to tell me what he had suffered in body and mind since he had left Tenedos on that unlucky day in July. I was filled with a sudden warmth of compassion for this battered creature who with agonized face was watching me depart. The sentry lowered his rifle to prevent the prisoner's approaching the gate, and he shrank back into the aperture of the stifling tent, the flies in a black multitude round his head. Then the sentry unfastened the gate and came to the salute as I passed out. I stopped a moment to admonish him on the subject of jesting with the prisoner's apprehensions.

"Look here, I know you don't mean to be cruel, but it is rather cruel to torment the poor devil in there by telling him he's going to be shot at dawn."

"We only said that in a manner of speaking for a joke, sir."

"I know, I know. But leave him in peace now. He's had a pretty poor time of it, and after all he has not been found guilty."

"I'm sure we had no idea of upsetting him when we passed one or two joking remarks, sir."

"All right, all right. Only don't tease him any more."

I had just turned away from the entanglement when I heard the eager excited voice of Vassilaki. I looked round and saw him standing with his face close to the barbed wire, dancing up and down like a captive bear who wants another bun.

"Well, what is it?"

"Captain Mackenzie, I have just a small thing to ask you. Captain Mackenzie, if I must not be shot to-morrow morning, and I don't think now when you have heard everything that I must be shot."

"I've made no promises."

"No, but you will put things so that I am not shot. Captain Mackenzie, if I am soon free again, will you ask if I can have a licence for sell Turkish-delight and chocolate and perhaps some ices? While I am sitting here, the most miserable creature in the world, I am always thinking to myself if I am not shot what a fine place this is for business. Captain Mackenzie, I would make splendid business with Turkish-delight if I can have a small canteen where I now am."

I turned away quickly to hide my laughter; and as I walked on to pick up Vitale I told myself I had been right in ascribing the suspicious behaviour of Stavro Vassilaki

entirely to motives of gain. He had almost sublimely revealed the truth about himself in that last request.

And thus the curtain falls on the third and final act of the Vassilaki drama. I may add for the benefit of those who want happy endings that the whole family were excluded ever afterwards from the Area of Operations; but what happened to them after that I do not know. Let us hope they are now making money in America. To the lay reader my readiness to believe in the innocuousness of the Vassilakis may sound premature and perhaps ingenuous; but I have never doubted for a moment since that he was the victim like many others out there of commercial jealousy. I have given the case at length, not on account of its intrinsic importance, but because it served the construction of this volume and because it was sufficiently typical to represent a hundred others. I came back from Mytilene with a note-book full of suspicious characters, into whose past or present investigations were being made, if we can dignify with such a name the few haphazard inquiries that our overworked Intelligence representatives might remember to make in the intervals of the more important business of obtaining information about the enemy. Stavro Vassilaki was only one among many. However, by escaping like that he provided us with an all too fugacious illusion that we really had captured a genuine spy this time; and that alone entitles him to the prominence I have given to his case. It was lucky for him that he was not arrested by the French: he would probably have paid with his life for escaping in that access of terror.

I felt an ineffable weariness that afternoon when Vitale and I were toiling back to G.H.Q. over that flaccid beach. The long wrestle with Vassilaki for the truth had left me utterly exhausted mentally and physically. However, in spite of what seemed an incapacity to respond ever again to any pleasure or pain, to any surprise or fear, to any tragedy

or comedy or farce, to anything indeed except the prospect of annihilation, I was abruptly startled into fresh receptivity, just as we reached the first slope of the camp, by a picture which will never fade from my memory. I have written earlier in this book of twice seeing Sir Ian Hamilton at the mercy of the Furies. This was the second time I had an impression of his thin eager form thus tormented. He was striding down the slope toward the beach at such a pace that little George Brodrick was half running to keep up with him, while even long-legged Kenny carrying a couple of coats over his arm and taking immense strides was gradually falling behind and would have to run yet if he wished to be at the water's edge in time to assume the correct attitude of an A.D.C. when his General embarks. Sir Ian returned our salutes mechanically. Those tormented eyes were seeing not us but Suvla and the heights beyond, not us but the Aja Liman Anafarta Ridge beyond, not us but the silver Narrows, not us but the cupolas and domes and minarets of Constantinople, which with every wasted moment were becoming more and more remote and nebulous and unattainable.

The lack of any news from Suvla had been preying upon the Commander-in-Chief's imagination, and that morning he had decided to avail himself of the Admiral's offer to put the destroyer *Arno* at his disposal. Thereupon one of the hostile gods at once tampered with her boilers, and Rear-Admiral Nicholson, S.N.O. at Kephalo, ordered her fires to be drawn. This ' d——d amphibious hitch ' as Sir Ian calls it in his diary had kept him marooned at G.H.Q. There was usually a destroyer on patrol between Imbros and Helles ; but if there was one to-day, another hostile god put her wireless out of order, for she did not respond to an urgent summons. There was not even a spare trawler to make the vital journey to Suvla. It was not until half-past three that a signal came from the *Exmouth* to say that the *Triad* was

sailing for Suvla at a quarter-past four and would give Sir Ian Hamilton a passage. Admiral de Robeck himself was over at Suvla in the *Chatham*, and the *Triad* was a yacht which he and his Staff had used since the freedom of the *Lord Nelson* was paralysed by the German submarines. So it was to go aboard the *Triad* that I saw Sir Ian striding down the slope that afternoon. Aspinall was over at Suvla and had sent this cable:

*Just been ashore where I found all quiet. No rifle fire and apparently no Turks. IXth Corps resting. Feel confident that golden opportunities are being lost and look upon the situation as serious.*

By the look in his eyes Sir Ian might just have received that ominous message; but as a matter of fact he did not receive it until the next day. The staff work of the hostile gods was indeed thorough. They had held the message up; but they took care to run no risk of its reaching the Commander-in-Chief by keeping him a prisoner on Imbros.

I was ill during the next few days. Some kind of neuralgic cystitis was added to dysentery and sciatica, and necessitated a painful operation by Hare, the G.H.Q. doctor, all of whose various genial inoculations I had managed to avoid. This business had to be performed by lantern light, with a gale blowing the sand through the tent and putting his instruments out of action one after another by sticking to the vaseline.

Remembering the circumstances in which they were written, I hesitate to print the following extracts from a letter I managed to scrawl day by day about this time, because they may reflect too much of a state of mind that was due to sickness of body. And yet they do manage to reflect something of the state of mind which ran right through G.H.Q. during this disastrous week. So with

the caution that I do not put them forward as a just commentary on the Suvla Landing I shall give them.

*August 9th.*

*This has been a day of disappointments. The IXth Army Corps failed to push on, and all our advantage seems lost. Sir Ian went off to curse the General commanding. It seems that he actually let his men bathe when by an effort the Peninsula might have been straddled. It's really heartrending. We still hope that they'll get to a certain ridge, but there is no news, and in military operations no news is bad news. Guy Dawnay and the C.G.S. are over there to-day and I shall hear more this evening.*

*The Australian and New Zealand casualties are about* 6,000*: they have done splendidly. The casualties before Achi Baba were about the same. Probably before this battle is over we shall have lost* 20,000*. God, it's ghastly!*

*Later.*

*There is still no good news of the IXth Army Corps. I'm afraid they've ruined the show. It's absolutely damnable. Dawnay was almost weeping when he came back from Suvla to-day. There were only eight hundred Turks and we had more than fifteen thousand men. They actually bathed, and George Brodrick told me that on one beach, whenever a shell burst within four hundred yards, all the men lay down. If this is Kitchener's Army (and the best three Divisions at that) give me the good old Territorials. . . . Hunter-Weston has been invalided home. If he had commanded that Army Corps we should have had the Bulair lines by now. Everything had gone well. In spite of great difficulties Ib had managed to keep Imbros water-tight.* The enemy was absolutely surprised: they thought we were attacking in the old place: their best*

*This feat reflects much credit on Thomson. He was ubiquitous. It would have been difficult for an Imbriote peasant to light a cigarette without having to satisfy Thomson afterwards that he had not been signalling to the enemy.

*troops were in the Southern Zone.* It is believed that my own little stunt at Mytilene really did draw the submarines south to wait for phantom transports that never came.† And the IXth Army Corps bitches the whole thing. There were forty ships with their guns pointing at the Anafarta ridge, and the General wouldn't advance because there had been no artillery preparation. He had been reading about artillery preparation in France, and his men were digging themselves in three hundred yards from the shore. There was the chance of open fighting: there was no need of artillery preparation: there were no Turks to fire at, and the aeroplanes said only three guns, which would have been captured. It's a tragedy.*

*Later.*

*I don't see much chance of my standing a winter campaign unless we have reached a city. This is a very trying climate in winter—the very abode of the winds.*

*August* 10*th.*

*Feeling pretty rotten. I've done a cross reference index raisonné of* 370 *names to-day . . . I see no chance of standing a winter campaign and no chance of forcing the Dardanelles before winter. . . . Some generals will get stellenbosched over this business.*

*August* 11*th.*

*Feeling rather cheap this morning after that long day with the Index and flies. . . To-day is really, I think, the hottest we've had. I rather sigh this morning for green England, Hampshire and some childish August days.*

*August* 12*th.*

*No grouse except a mental one! Some sickness in O yesterday. The Brigade-Major of a certain Brigade had wired to the Brigadier:*

*As a matter of fact they were on the point of making a general attack in Helles the very day we made one first. This must have doubled our casualties there.

†There seems reason to suppose this was not fancy. Certainly no submarine showed his periscope near Suvla.

*" Two Turkish shrapnel burst over the battalion this morning. Glad to report that battalion kept quite calm and that there were no casualties."*

*I wonder what they would have said to this telegram at Lancashire Landing!*

Much of the bitterness in these extracts may be unfair; but whatever modifications a clearer knowledge of events might have led one to make, the inertia of that Sunday must be held responsible for the failure of the Suvla Landing. Even H. W. Nevinson was driven to write harshly during that horrible week. In *Last Chances and Changes*, the third volume of that noble and adventurous autobiography which reflects in such enviable prose the mind of a paladin, a scholar, and a veteran lover of humanity, even he writes:

*That night I was recalled to Imbros, and sailed in a trawler full of Staff officers, who discussed polo and eatables all the way, perhaps to take their minds off the situation. I never knew why I was recalled, unless it was to witness how gloomy, jealous, and ill-tempered a Headquarter Staff can become when times are bad.*

They must have given that impression if Nevinson says so; but I do think that the polo and the eatables were like the ladies that Aspinall drew on the dark night of the landing. Either they had to talk about such remote things as polo and decent food, or they had to show themselves gloomy and ill-tempered, but for one or the other they will have to be excused. It was a searing week, without even the minor consolation they always had at St. Omer of being able to blame the French when things went wrong.

The twelfth of August was to be a critical day for my future. I had finished some pages of Ib stuff and was taking them across to the office tent to be typed out when, in the short space between it and the tent in which I worked, I met Sir Ian face to face as he was hurrying across probably to

consult the C.G.S. about a cable from Lord K. which arrived that day to ask him why he could not ginger up the Tenth and Eleventh Divisions ! I had saluted and was passing on, papers in hand, when he stopped me.

"You're looking very ill, Mackenzie."

"I'm not absolutely fit, sir."

"The usual trouble out here ? "

"Yes, sir."

"You're looking wretchedly ill," he repeated. "I'll tell you what you'd better do. You'd better go to Athens for the week-end. The *Imogen* leaves to-night. Go to Captain Mitchell, and get him to make arrangements for you to sail in her. Don't be in too much of a hurry to come back. Take the whole of next week. I daresay Sir Francis Elliot will ask you to stay with him out at Cephissia. Glorious air. Do you no end of good. I don't want to lose another of you young writers."

With this allusion to the death of Rupert Brooke, he hurried on.

Had I left the tent a couple of seconds later, I should not have met Sir Ian face to face like that and I should not have gone to Athens that week-end. I should probably have dragged on at G.H.Q. until I was sent on board a hospital ship to Malta ; and what, when I was well again, would have been my next job ? Probably office-work in Cairo with perhaps the Palestine campaign ultimately. However, I was not two seconds later, and so out of those two grains of mustard seed grew like a mustard tree the next two years of my life. Yet, when I was back in the I tent, this was the way I finished off that laborious letter, from w hich I havegiven extracts :

*I'm going to-night with the boat that goes to meet the King's Messenger. I shall be back here on Monday evening.*

## CHAPTER XXI

### HELLAS

CONFIDENT as I was that I should return to Kephalo if not by the beginning of next week, at any rate by the week after, my farewells were casual. Deedes entrusted me with the material for a long confidential talk with the still mysterious V, a meeting with whom was next to a sight of the Parthenon what I most looked forward to in Athens. He also commissioned me to procure for him a bottle of the thickest brilliantine obtainable and some methylated spirits for his morning tea. Dear old Colonel Ward wanted a writing-pad, lime juice, and a shaving brush. I was never to know if the writing-pad proved a success, for when I came back to G.H.Q. in September to be carried away at the end of a week on a stretcher for the last time, he had already been invalided home. It has always been a regret to me that I did not thank that gruff old Gunner, whose sense of humour was sometimes almost apoplectic in the violence of its expression, for his infinite kindness to myself. Guy Dawnay commissioned sweets, a pair of strong shoes, and some manilla cheroots. And manilla cheroots were what Graves wanted together with a Jaeger blanket. Pears' soap for Major Delacombe, Vinolia for General Braithwaite ; thus I find their respective tastes in lather scribbled in my note-book. Powell was exigent. He required fly-papers, a bottle of Kutnow, a cup and saucer, a pair of string not strong shoes, a small bottle of hairwash, and if Kutnow was not procurable why then Eno was to

be the substitute. The Navy in the person of Captain Mitchell was content with a mug and fly-papers, but Cecil Aspinall wanted a cup and saucer, a tooth-brush, tooth-powder, Odol, and hairwash. He had just adorned the peak of his cap with the extra row of gilded oak-leaves that celebrated his Brevet as Lieut.-Colonel, not to mention putting up the ribbon of the D.S.O. to take precedence on his breast, and though I would not connect these glories with a last minute request to bring him back from Athens a new looking-glass, I took sympathetic care in choosing it to ensure him as large a field as possible for reflected splendour. Eddie Keeling demanded a kilogram of plain chocolate and added severely that if I did not come back at the next week-end I was to arrange without fail that his chocolate was sent off by the King's Messenger. A diplomat like Eddie knew the proper way to use a King's Messenger; and his demand for chocolate sounded like an ultimatum backed by the warships of the Great Powers. I felt as Crete must have felt in the first years of the twentieth century. Having impressed on me the need for the prompt despatch of the chocolate, he relaxed his severity and gave me a letter for presentation to Her Imperial Highness the Princess Nicolas of Greece. I find in my note-book many other commissions; but it is significant that nowhere do I find the name of George Lloyd. He wanted nothing.

Immediately after dinner I walked down with Patrick Shaw-Stewart to the landing-pier at Kephalo. He was on his way back to the Rest Camp at the other side of K beach; but he waited to chat with me until Captain Potts of the *Imogen* came down with the mails to go aboard. We sat on a couple of barrels under the lee of the low sandstone cliff, which jutted out at this point for twenty yards or so and gave a certain amount of shelter to the small pier that had lately been erected. The young moon had set, and a cool gusty wind, which seemed to be increasing, gave me one or

two premonitory qualms over the passage. However, I soon forgot to bother about these in the joy of talking about Oxford and about books. Patrick Shaw-Stewart was one of the most brilliant of a brilliant Balliol group that came up soon after I had gone down. He did not look much like a Fellow of All Souls now, in his R.N.D. uniform and long pointed red beard, of the privilege to grow which he had as a Naval Officer availed himself. He inquired tenderly after *Guy and Pauline* and told me how much Rupert Brooke had been looking forward to reading my next book. He told me, too, something I had not known, and this was that a criticism of *Carnival* which had received second prize in a *Saturday Westminster* literary competition for the best criticism of the best novel of 1912 and had been printed in those sea-green and incorruptible pages had been written by the dead poet.

"And Charles Lister is always asking when your next book is coming out and to hurry up with it so that he can read it before he's killed," he added.

But I think Charles Lister was killed before *Guy and Pauline* reached Helles.

It was strangely exhilarating to hear from Patrick Shaw-Stewart on this dark and gusty Kephalo night that there were people over on the Peninsula who genuinely looked forward to my next book. I had begun to forget until I sat on that barrel talking to him that I had another existence to which one day I might return. And then we talked about Oxford. I told him how in order to check some reference in the second volume of *Sinister Street*, I had gone up there at the end of July, 1914, and how Sligger* had been sure that it would never come to war, and how I had walked along Holywell in the emptiness of the Long Vacation, presage of a longer emptiness which would never again be filled in quite the same old way, and

*F. F. Urquhart, Fellow and Tutor of Balliol College, Oxford.

how I had met Ronnie Knox* coming round the corner from the Broad. And then we talked about Ronnie Knox, and wondered which road he would ultimately take. It seems to me that above the splashing of the water against the side of the pier I hear Patrick Shaw-Stewart saying that he did not think Ronnie Knox was very happy at Trinity, of which he was then Fellow and Chaplain. I remember, too, telling him that Cyril† had written to me after reading the second volume of *Sinister Street* to say that it marked the end of an epoch and that Oxford could never be the same again.

"But if six nights ago things had gone differently at Suvla," I added, "the continuity might not have been broken. But now it must be, for the whole spirit of the War will change as it goes on, which it must do now for God knows how long."

Patrick Shaw-Stewart agreed with this, adding how glad he was to be in the R.N.D., because it was jealous of the past. The thought of people like him and Charles Lister and 'Ock' Asquith and Kelly, the Balliol pianist, who had just been wounded in the foot, and many others glowed in the darkness. And I have lived to hear Rupert Brooke sneered at for a romantic by the prematurely weaned young sucking-pigs of the next generation. It was welcome to find a year or two ago the sanest pages I had read about Literature and the War written by an R.N.D. survivor, Douglas Jerrold, at the close of his excellent book *The Hawke Battalion*. I commend them to any people who are as much nauseated as I am by the Teutonic hysteria which is the intellectual vogue of 1929.

But the long talk with Patrick Shaw-Stewart draws to an end. Wavering lanterns are seen coming down the slope from the camp. Presently, like the burliest, brawniest fig-

*Father Ronald Knox.
†Cyril Bailey, Fellow and Tutor of Balliol College, Oxford.

ure of Punch imaginable, arrives Captain Potts, and behind him in whites a Naval Commander, with a sizable nose himself, a tall man whose hair at the back could do with a trim and who is saying genially that he hopes we have not been cursing him for keeping us waiting so long. The bags are flung into the cutter, the crew of which have been hanging on to the pier with boat-hooks for the last hour. The passengers for the *Imogen* follow the bags. Captain Potts takes his seat astern. We push off into the gusty murk of the harbour. I wave farewell to Patrick Shaw-Stewart, who reminds me in that moment of the Pied Piper of Hamelin as he stands there in the flickering lantern-light. It was the last time I saw him. He was killed at Salonica not many months later.

The *Imogen* before the war had been the yacht of the British Embassy at Constantinople. She was a stout-hearted little packet and, in her grey war-paint, she put her dainty nose into seas she had never on the Sweet Waters dreamed of having to face one day. She saw plenty of service and in 1916 was on the Tigris. I felt seasick that night and did not manage to sleep much, for though the sea was not really rough there was enough motion to keep such a small craft lively, and my various ailments resenting the whole business of travelling combined to pay me out for it. However, the next morning was radiant, with a sea like pale blue velvet, and so long as I could be sitting in a chair on the after deck I felt all right.

The tall naval officer in white whom I had hardly seen the night before proved to be Commander W. F. Sells,* the Naval Attaché of our Legation in Athens, and this morning was the beginning of an intercourse between him and me which was never marred by a single misunderstanding throughout two topsy-turvy and difficult years. He had been sunk off Lowestoft on September 22nd, 1914,

*Captain W. F. Sells, C.M.G., R.N.

in the *Aboukir*, had, as I remember, been taken on board the *Hogue*, sunk in her, been taken on board the *Cressy*, sunk in her, and finally had waded ashore as naked as the dawn. But better than the precise details of his experience of a submarine's torpedoes I recall that some months after this he received a communication from the Admiralty to say that his watch had been found on the beach and that the five pounds' compensation he had been granted for it would be deducted from his next pay. I do not propose to write any more about Sells now, because he plays no part in this volume beyond that of a shipmate for a brief voyage down through the Ægean. So I shall keep him for my *Athenian Memories*.

The other passenger in the *Imogen* this thirteenth of August, was Lieutenant H. A. Simpson, R.N., who was as good a companion as one could wish to find for a week-end's leave. He was only twenty-one, but he commanded T. B. 063 and the torpedo-boat flotilla as well, and I always heard him spoken of as a most competent young officer. Apart from his professional abilities, he had a tremendous zest for life, a sense of humour, and to the gaiety of youth he added sympathy and charm. How we laughed when the wife of a distinguished fellow-countryman in Athens asked him if he did not find it very hot in his little boat when the windows were shut to keep out the waves.

Potts Bey, who in real life had commanded the Khedivial yacht, was a splendid host. I have described him as burly and brawny; but actually his strength was alarming. If Dr. Grimesby Roylott of Stoke Moran had bent *his* poker he would not have been content to straighten it like Sherlock Holmes. He would have hanged the Doctor with the poker by tying a slip-knot in it. He could tear a pack of cards across twice with his fingers: he could pick up a metal ash-tray and crumple it up in his hand like a piece of paper. Once, when we were crossing the road together in

Athens, a horse and carriage seemed inclined to run us down, whereupon Potts stopped, raised his eyebrows at the driver, put out his arm, and pushed the horse back on to its haunches. On another occasion we went to a cinema in Athens, where against the rules of the establishment he lighted a large pipe. An attendant came bustling along the row to forbid this breach of decorum, and Potts, after brushing him aside once or twice like a fly, at last without taking his eyes off the screen or rising from his seat picked him up with one arm and tossed him back into the aisle. Even that Punch's chin of Captain Potts had a muscular vigour of its own. I remember at the same cinema becoming aware that my shoulder was beginning to ache and realizing that it was because Potts was resting his chin upon it and digging it in to me at poignant moments of the drama. I was reminded of Alice's experience with the Duchess at the Queen's croquet-party. Even on that voyage down through the Ægean he was continually astonishing us with casual feats of superhuman strength. Perhaps Heracles kept the Argonauts amused in this fashion when they were voyaging northward over this course. Potts was always hoping to catch sight of a periscope so that he might take a shot at it with the Japanese three-pounder of which he was, appropriately, as proud as Punch. Three times he vowed he could see one, and three times it turned out to be the leg of a poor swollen horse that was drifting past. Sells was a gunnery man, but he had to be careful to treat Potts's three-pounder with respect, for, though it would have been about as useful as a peashooter, had we really sighted a submarine, we did not want Potts to think it was one and start tapping us on the head with it in playful argument.

I have written enough perhaps of light-blue velvet seas and radiance of lucid air; but the spell of that Ægean summer weather is still potent, and when I look back across the years to that cerulean voyage I surrender anew to the

drowsy enchantment of it and would fain dream away the pages of this chapter as I dreamed away the soft sea miles that rippled past like the play of light in a precious stone. Our course was south-west, and the illusion was that we were not making it by steam, but rather, as the arid hills of Lemnos slowly merged with the sky astern, that we were being drawn along by the laughing Oceanides.

Once on my way back to the deck-chair and the conversation of Sells and Simpson and Potts, I stopped to rest for a moment and fell into a mood of somewhat solemn retrospection. It was exactly thirteen weeks ago to a day that I had sailed northward from Alexandria in the *Franconia* over this same sea. Pictures from those crowded three months, isolated visions of incidents mostly trivial, rushed through my mind. I was standing in the bows of the transport and beholding for the first time the girdle of poppies round Achi Baba's hunched and sullen shape, poppies bright as redcoat battalions on old field-days at Aldershot. I was turning to see General Gouraud wave a farewell from the doorway of the domed fort at Sedd-el-Bahr. I was sitting by George Lloyd's camp-bed on a stifling afternoon and hearing him say that he had a wretched headache. I was laughing at Eddie Keeling's undiplomatic language while we tried to loosen the ropes of our tent on a night of sudden storm. I was hearing the frogs croak on and on through the nocturnal stillness of Kephalo. I was seeing Darwin gravely lifting the side of my mosquito-net to hand me my morning egg covered with black fingermarks. I was walking with Val Braithwaite along the beach in the amber of a still evening, and planning the details of that dinner at the end of the war. I was trudging in the dusty wake of Orlo Williams past a boscage of pink oleanders beside a rocky watercourse on the road to Panaghia. I was galloping with Captain Loring down a deep Tenedos lane and revelling in his jovial laughter. I was being jostled on the crowded

quayside of Mytilene as I turned back to look over my shoulder at officers from the New Army being rowed ashore in small boats, some with the grey hackle of the Inniskilling Fusiliers in their sun helmets, others with the blue and green of the Dublins. I was meeting Admiral de Robeck with Bowlby, his Flag-Lieutenant, glass under arm, as they came out of Sir Ian Hamilton's tent after tea, and thinking to myself how like a jovial farmer at some agriculture show the Admiral looked when he dug his heavy walking-stick deep into the sandy ground, and waited a minute for Commodore Keyes to overtake him. I was crossing the lines at G.H.Q. to go to dinner and stopping to listen to a piper's lament skirling along the dusky air while a score or so of battle-weary Scottish Borderers came marching very slowly and very heavily up from the water's edge to be rested for a week by guarding the camp.

And then these pictures of the past abruptly faded in what seemed either mirage or magic of the present, when far away to starboard I saw apparently floating imponderable as smoke above the horizon a stupendous equilateral triangle, the colour of chalcedony. Awed by this vast aerial vision, which it was impossible to link with any ordinary landfall, I rejoined my companions and asked Potts what it could be.

"Why, that's Mount Athos," he told me.

And so incredibly it was. This subtile shape was Mount Athos, the holy mountain, dreaming like a titanic sail more than ninety miles away, the rest of Europe hull down below the horizon and Asia invisible. Almost imperceptibly the mountain receded into the azure north. We looked, and the mighty shape was still there. We looked again, and it was not.

The *Imogen* sailed along the austere coast of Scyros during the afternoon. On that craggy island Achilles was hidden by his mother among the daughters of Lycomedes,

and hence by sight of arms and sound of trumpe
Odysseus lured him away to join the expeditionar
force against Troy. Here was murdered Theseus, whos
ghost in full armour led the van at Marathon. And i
April a new legend had touched the island with im
mortality, for Rupert Brooke was buried there.

Σῆμ' οὐκ ἀλλοδαπὴ σὸν ἔχει κόνις,

*No foreign earth it is that holds thy tomb.*

We left Scyros astern and sailed on into the south-wes
across a shimmering sea of golden blue, until with the shu
ting in of dusk we approached Euboea. The young moo
was hanging over the mountains in the last green glow of th
sunset; and by the time we entered the Doro Channel
was deep starry night.

At dawn, too much on fire with the thought of at las
beholding Greece to care about illness or pain, I dragge
myself up on deck, and I have never ceased to thank God
did so, for I was granted the perfect expression of a lifelon
dream.

The *Imogen* was passing below Cape Sunium; and there
white and light as a sea-bird on the cliff's edge, I saw th
marble columns of the Temple of Poseidon, a legend-haunte
world of famous mountains beyond. This work of ma
washed by lustral air achieved under the faded blue of th
morning sky a serene and virginal aloofness not to b
matched even by that young moon of yesterday's dusk
In the first excitement of this apparition I wanted to shou
and fetch everybody up on deck to wonder at it; but
found that I was crying, for in that moment all my yout
was in my eyes. So I just stood there and watched in
rapture the white columns grow warm as ivory whe
the great sun came glancing up out of the sea.

At about nine o'clock the *Imogen* berthed in the little har
bour of Phaleron. The first view of the Acropolis of Athen

glittering in the morning sunlight four miles away set my pulses racing again, for it too was fulfilling the fancies of years, in a way that I had never dared to suppose would ever really happen; and to the Acropolis was added the first vision of the hill Lycabetus, the shape and height of which I had somehow never pictured to myself. The glory of the Acropolis has always been so bright that the value of Lycabetus to that classic landscape has not been sufficiently emphasized. Yet Athens without Lycabetus would be like Edinburgh without the Castle Rock.

I think we took the train from Phaleron that morning; but I remember more clearly the hush of decorous existence which seemed to enfold Simpson and myself when we stepped out of the blazing sunshine into the cool marble entrance-hall of the Legation, the murmur of pleasant civilized voices and the look of their owners' civilized clothes.

"Are you going right off into hospital?" Simpson asked.

"Not till we've had lunch at the best hotel."

"Do you think you'd better? You're looking pretty rotten."

"I'm feeling like death. But I'm going to see Athens first."

END OF VOLUME ONE

# INDEX


A

Andreas, M., 280, 281.
Aristarchi Bey, 265, 271 *et seq.*, 277, 326-7.
Aristarchi, John, 272, 273.
Aristarchi, Mrs. John, 273.
Ascarides, Theodore, 299.
Ashmead-Bartlett, Ellis, 89, 106 *et seq.*, 177 *et seq.*, 197 *et seq.*, 238.
Aspinall-Oglander, Brigadier-General C. F., 97-8, 110, 117, 120, 122, 123, 139, 353, 368, 369, 370, 371-2, 386, 392.
Asquith, "Ock," 394.

B

Bailey, Cyril, 394.
Bailloud, General, 77, 200-1, 207.
Barttelot, Sir Walter, 368.
Bass, Cipher Officer, 349.
Bertie, Lord, 108.
Beynon, Brigadier-Gen. H. L., 64, 129.
Bigham, Lieut.-Col. the Hon. Clive (now Viscount Mersey), 41, 101.
Binyon, Laurence, 139-40.
Birdwood, F.-M. Sir William, 95.
Birrell, Surgeon-General W. E., 66-7, 369-70, 371.
Blake, George, 204.
Bowlby, Flag-Lieutenant, 399.
Braithwaite, Valentine, 93-5, 133, 134, 138-9, 353, 356, 364, 398.
Braithwaite, General Sir Walter, 93, 110, 353, 391.
Bridges, Major-Gen. Sir W. T., 81.
Brodrick, George (Viscount Dunsford), 126 *et seq.*, 328, 329, 331, 385, 387.
Brooke, Rupert, 390, 393, 394, 400.
Burnham, Lord, 198.
Buxton, Robin, 96.

C

Cadorna, General, 354.
Carter, Captain, 149-50, 157, 160, 173 *et seq.*, 200-1.
Cecil, Bob (Viscount Cecil of Chelwood), 323.
Chirol, Sir Valentine, 368.
Churchill, Captain (12th Bengal Cavalry), 168 *et seq.*
Churchill, Major Jack, 81.
Churchill, Sidney, 14.
Churchill, Right Hon. Winston, 90, 331, 358, 365.

D

Dawnay, Major-Gen. G. P., 96 *et seq.*, 110, 138, 231, 353, 368, 371, 372, 387, 391.
Deedes, Brigadier-Gen. Sir Wyndham, 84, 98-9, 120, 122, 123, 160 *et seq.*, 180-1, 226, 231 *et seq.*, 237, 294, 323, 349, 350, 367-8, 372-3, 375, 380, 391.
Dégouette, General, 207.

Delacombe, Lieut.-Col. Addis, 55, 84, 350, 391.
De Lisle, General, 163.
De Robeck, Admiral, 39, 88, 324, 328, 386, 399.
De Sauvigny, Captain Bertier, 355-6.
Douglas, Norman, 14.

E

Egerton, Major-General, 165, 166-7.
Elliot, Sir Francis, 85, 86, 294, 390.
Esposito, Arturo, 281.

F

Falkenhayn, General von, 295.
Fiennes, Lieut.-Col. the Hon. Sir Eustace, 38.
Flecker, James Elroy, 250.
Foch, Marshal, 358.
Fraz, Franz, 280, 281.
Freeman, John, 141 (note).
Fuller, Major-Gen. C. G., 61.

G

Goltz, F.-M. von der, 295.
Goode, Sir W. A. M., 6.
Gounaris, M., 287.
Gouraud, General, 49, 77, 112, 121, 168, 206, 207, 357, 398.
Grant, Captain Heathcoat, 247-9, 330, 343.
Graves, Sir Robert Windham, 59-61, 100, 105, 349, 350, 391.
Gregory, J. D., 368.
Grey, Sir Edward, 294.
Gwenn, Edmund, 102.

H

Hadkinson, Lieutenant, 256-8, 266 *et seq.*, 325-7, 338.
Hamilton, General, 294.
Hamilton, Sir Ian, 7, 9, 10, 47 *et seq.*, 63, 90, 105, 108, 110, 140, 148, 177, 179, 294, 328, 329 *et seq.*, 352, 354-5, 357, 358, 363-5, 373, 385-6, 389-90.
Hankey, Lieutenant-Colonel Maurice, 357 *et seq.*
Hare, Doctor, 386.
Hawker, Brigadier-General C. J., 35, 36, 38.
Heathcote-Smith, C. E., 249-52, 253 *et seq.*, 260, 262 *et seq.*, 279, 280, 284, 287 *et seq.*, 295, 303 *et seq.*, 315, 318, 326-7, 330-2, 336.
Herbert, Lieut.-Col. the Hon. Aubrey, 62-3, 83, 190, 257, 320, 321-7, 332, 334-5, 338, 343, 346-7.
Higgins, Surgeon, 184, 212, 216-17, 222-4, 228.
Hill, Brigadier-Gen. F. F., 328, 332, 338.
Hodder, Lieutenant Ben, 254-5.
Hole, E. C., 316-17.
Hoover, H. C. (President of U.S.A.), 6.
Hore-Ruthven, Brigadier-Gen. the Hon. A. G. A., 354.
Hunter-Weston, Lieut.-General Sir Aylmer, 148, 149, 150, 151 *et seq.*, 159, 200-1, 387.

J

James, Henry, 141-2.
Jerrold, Douglas, 394.

K

Keeling, Eddie, 49 *et seq.*, 57, 84, 86, 91-2, 100, 105, 349, 350, 354, 392, 398.
Kelly, Mr., 394.
Kenny, Captain, 31, 34 *et seq.*, 42 *et seq.*, 129-30, 385.

Keyes, Commodore, 399.
Keyes, Lieut.-Commander Adrian, 110.
Kitchener, Lord, 61-2, 294, 363.
Knox, Father Ronald, 394.
Koumpas, Mrs., 265, 272-3.

L

La Borde, Lieutenant, 356.
La Mouche, Commandant, 254.
Lister, Charles, 393, 394.
Lloyd, Captain George (Lord Lloyd of Dolobran), 50 *et seq.*, 84 *et seq.*, 323, 328, 330, 331, 349-50, 367, 392, 398.
Loring, Vice-Admiral E. K., 184, 185, 188, 189, 212, 215 *et seq.*, 227, 398.
Lossow, Colonel von, 295.
Lygon, Henry, 162.

M

Mahon, Sir Bryan, 328, 329.
Manoli, M., 192, 218, 244.
Marsh, Edward Howard, 7 *et seq.*
Massie, Hughes, 199.
Maxwell, Sir John, 2, 4, 350.
Maxwell, Captain Sir William, 106-8, 176, 179.
"Mimi" (*see* Ruggiero, Domenico).
Mitchell, Rear-Admiral F. H., 241, 390, 392.
Müller, Heinrich, 279, 280.
Müller, Henri, 281.
Mullins, General G. J. H., 227.
Mustapha Kemal, 269.
Mytilene, Nomarch of, 287 *et seq.*, 331, 339, 342.

N

Napier, Lieut.-Col. the Hon. H. D., 368-9.
Nevinson, H. W., 237-8, 289.
Nicholson, Rear-Admiral, 385.

O

O'Higgin, Kevin, 184, 185.
Oldfield, Mr., 125.

P

Palmes, Colonel, 117.
Palmes, Commander G. B., 118.
Paris, Major-Gen. Sir Archibald, 67, 71, 151-2.
Pascalides, M., 226, 229, 233 *et seq.*, 376.
Pelliot, Lieutenant, 356.
Pirie-Gordon, Harry, 79.
Plunket, Major, 150-1, 154 *et seq.*, 160.
Pollen, Lieut.-Col. S. H., 81, 127-8.
Potts, Captain, 392, 395, 396 *et seq.*
Powell, Colonel E. B., 139-40, 356, 391.

R

Rahmi Bey, 269.
Ruggiero, Domenico ("Mimi"), 12, 14.

S

Sackville, Lord, 97.
Samson, Air Commodore C. R., 172, 189, 216.
Samson, "Bill," 215-16.
Sanders, General Liman von, 284, 295.
Sarrail, General, 207.
Secker, Martin, 1, 11, 12.
Sells, Commander W. F., 395-6, 397.
Shaw, Bernard, 257.
Shaw-Stewart, Patrick, 123, 392, 393-5.
Simpson, Lieutenant H. A., 396, 401.
Smith, Lieut.-Col. Ian M., 180, 349, 350, 367.

Solon, Mr., 300, 301, 304.
Spee, Count von, 248.
Squire, J. C., 141 (note).
Stopford, Lieut.-Gen. the Hon. Sir Frederick, 352.
Strange, Lieutenant, 241-2, 246, 348.
Street, Colonel, 157-8, 201.
Sturdee, Sir Doveton, 248.
Sykes, Major-Gen. Sir Frederick, 187-8.
Sykes, Sir Mark, 52.

T

Temple, Major-Gen. R. C., 40, 218.
Tennant, H. J., 2, 3.
Thompson, Harold, 184, 189, 190-3, 208, 213 *et seq.*, 216-17, 229, 233, 242-5, 298, 300, 324.
Thompson, Lieutenant, 39, 40.
Thomson, Lieutenant John, 101-5, 387 (note).

U

Urquhart, F. F., 392.

V

Vassilaki, Atalanta, 302, 324, 334.
Vassilaki, Calliope, 302, 306, 324, 325, 334.
Vassilaki, Marika, 302, 324, 334.
Vassilaki, Stavro, 218, 229, 242, 243, 244, 298, 301 *et seq.*, 306 *et seq.*, 334, 375, 377 *et seq.*
Vassilaki, Yanni, 218, 225, 228, 298, 379.
Vedova, Wilfred, 190-2, 218 *et seq.*, 228, 245, 300 *et seq.*, 317-21, 324, 325, 332-3, 335-8.
Venizelos, M., 287, 294.
Vitale, Captain, 354, 355, 376, 384.
Vlasto, Surgeon, 343.

W

Walker-Heneage-Vivian, Admiral A., 227-8.
Wallis, Bernard, 73, 74.
Ward, Col. M. C. P., 52 *et seq.*, 84, 110, 118, 349, 350, 380, 391.
Williams, Orlo, 7-8, 46, 83, 100, 105, 135, 140, 354, 368, 376, 398.
Wilson, Admiral Sir Arthur, 362 (note).
Wilson, Colonel, 159, 160.
Wilson, Sir Henry, 358.
Wilson, Lieut.-Col. J. T. R., 149.
Woods, Maurice, 162.
Woodward, Major-Gen. Sir Edward, 64.

Z

Zecchini, Mr., 262, 300, 301, 303.
Zervaki, Vassili, 243, 244.

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